1.2.a.

Monſieur *BOSSU's*

TREATISE

OF THE

EPICK POEM:

CONTAINING

Many Curious Reflexions, very Uſeful and Neceſſary for the Right Underſtanding and Judging of the Excellencies of *HOMER* and *VIRGIL*.

Made *Engliſh* from the *French*, with a *Preface* upon the ſame Subject, by *W. J.*

To which are added,

An Eſſay upon *Satyr*, by Monſ. *D'Acier*;

AND

A Treatiſe upon *Paſtoral*, by Monſ. *Fontanelle*.

The Second Edition: With a Diſcourſe on the Uſefulneſs of the Work, and ſome Memoirs concerning the Life of the Author, not in the former Edition.

In Two VOLUMES.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

To the Honoured

Sir *Richard Blackmore* K^t

DOCTOR of PHYSICK,

AND

FELLOW of the *College of Physicians* in *LONDON*.

SIR,

THE *enſuing Treatiſe, ſince it has learned to ſpeak* Engliſh, *ſeems, by a peculiar kind of Title, to lay a more eſpecial Claim to your Patronage, than to any others. For though the Tranſlator be a perfect Stranger to you, yet the Author, which he has ventur'd to tranſlate, is well known by all to be one you are intimately acquainted with: Witneſs your excellent* Prince Arthur, *wherein you have in a great meaſure confin'd your ſelf to the Rules and Precepts which* Ariſtotle *and* Horace, *and even our* Boſſu, *have preſcrib'd to the* Ethick Poem.

'Tis upon this Account, Sir, *that I preſume to caſt this Tranſlation under your Protection; not queſtioning but, as the good-natur'd Critick is always the Poet's Friend; ſo now, vice verſâ, the generous Poet will ſtand the Criticks*

Friend, and ſuffer his impartial Reflexions to appear in the Engliſh *World under the Patronage of ſo great a Name.*

I might here run out into high and juſt Encomiums upon your late extraordinary Performance; but there is no need for it, ſince the Work loudly ſpeaks forth its own Praiſes: And I ſhould rather ſeem unjuſt in ſaying too little, than be thought guilty of Flattery for ſaying too much in its Commendation.

I have, Sir, *in the* Preface, *ventur'd to make ſome few Reflections on your* Poem, *and hope you have Candour enough to excuſe the Freedom I have taken therein. If I have offended, or committed any Miſtake, I here declare my ſelf willing and ready to retract upon due Conviction; and ſhall be always forward to ſubmit my ſelf to the Sentence of better Judgments.*

All I have more to ſay, is, to beg Pardon for my Preſumption, in deſiring to prefix your Name before my weak Performance; which Favour I hope you will grant to,

Honoured Sir,

Your very Oblig'd and

Humble Servant,

(though unknown,)

W. J.

THE

THE PREFACE OF THE TRANSLATOR.

'TIS Sir *Roger L' Eſtrange*'s jocular Remark in his Preface before his Erglish *Tully*'s Offices, *That a Man had as good go to Court without a Cravat, as appear in Print without a Preface:* And therefore, becauſe my Author has none, it may be expected I ſhould Preface it for him. But ſince I undertake to perſonate ſo great a

Critick as the Learned *Boſſu*; it may to ſome ſeem requiſite (let me be never ſo meanly qualified for ſuch an Undertaking) that I ſhould give the World ſome Account of *Poetry* in *General*, and eſpecially of the *Epick Poem* in *Particular*.

As for *Poetry* in *General*, I ſhall not trouble my Head much about it at preſent; the World has had enough on that Subject already, and by much abler Pens. "That its Nature is Divine; "that it owes its Original to Heaven; "how from ſmall Beginnings it roſe at "laſt to that Luſtre we find it in, in "*Homer*'s and *Virgil*'s Days; and with-"al, what ſtrange Effects it always had "upon the Minds of Men:" Theſe Things, and much to the ſame Purpoſe have been told over and over, and need not be repeated here. Not only *Ariſtotle* and *Horace*, but their *Commentators* and the *Criticks*, not only of our own but other Nations, have made it their Buſineſs to ſet forth its Excellence, and to recommend it to Mankind as the Nobleſt *Humane* (I had almoſt ſaid *Divine*) *Art*. Beſides, that its true Uſe and End is to inſtruct and profit the

World

World more than to delight and pleaſe it, has been ſo fully and clearly made out, by *D'acier* in his Preface before his Reflections on *Ariſtotle's Poeſie*, and lately by our own Country-man the Learned Dr. *Blackmore* in his Preface before his *Prince Arthur*, that I think my ſelf exempted in a great Meaſure from that Task likewiſe.

But however, it cannot but with a Bluſh be confeſſed, that moſt of our *Modern* Poets ſeem to have diverted the true Deſign of *Poetry* to one of a quite contrary Nature, whilſt they ſtudy rather to pleaſe the debauch'd World in their own Way, than to give them any wholeſome Inſtructions to become Wiſer and Better. To ſuch as theſe therefore it would be adviſeable to conſult Dr. *Blackmore's* Preface, and the third Chapter of the fourth Book in the enſuing Treatiſe: And they will there find how much the being a Man of Probity and Vertue is to be preferr'd, to the being a debauch'd, complaiſant and temporizing Poet. They would do well to conſider, that all the Reproach and Scandal which is caſt upon *Poetry* and *Themſelves*, is in a great Meaſure owing to their

own ill Conduct. For when the unthoughtful Many see Men of debauch'd Principles usurp to themselves the Sacred Name of Poet; when they see base, servile, mercenary Spirits prostitute their Pens to mean, sordid, and unbecoming Subjects, such as lewd and profane *Plays*, abusive and scurrillous *Farces*, lascivious *Odes*; and wanton *Sonnets*; they think they have reason to look upon Poets with Contempt, and to stile them *the Scum of Mankind*. And it were well if their Censures went no farther, and only touch'd those that deserv'd them; but they go on, and conclude that Poetry it self is in all the fault, and that 'tis *This* that is the cause of so much Extravagancy and Debauchery in the World. But it does not follow, because many, that pretend to Poetry, do by their infamous Practices bring a Scandal upon it; and because an ill-natured Multitude, that has little or no Relish for such sort of Things, casts Dirt upon it; I say, it does not follow from thence, that *Poetry* is ever the worse. For at this rate *Religion* it self, though the best thing in the World, yet is vilified and scandaliz'd by too many,

many, and would fall under the ſame uncharitable Cenſure. In Spite therefore of the Malice, Envy, and Detraction of its Enemies, and notwithſtanding all the Contempt and Scandal caſt upon it, by its pretended Friends and Votaries, it has been, and will ſtill be accounted a noble Thing by the Wiſer and the better part of Mankind.

Now whatever is ſaid in favour of *Poetry* in *General*, may in a great meaſure be applied to the *Epick Poem* in *Particular*; That being the Principal and moſt Sublime Part of all Poeſie, and what *Rapin* with a great deal of Reaſon affirms to be *the greateſt Work Humane Wit is capable of.* I might here ſhew at large how far it does excel the other two Parts of *Great Poetry*, *Tragedy* and *Comedy:* But this every one acknowledges, even thoſe who are the greateſt Admirers of, and Pretenders to the *Drama*; and 'tis this that my Author ſufficiently makes out in ſeveral Paſſages of his Treatiſe; ſo that I think my ſelf excus'd from that invidious Task. My preſent Buſineſs ſhall be only to conſider, how excellent it is in its own Nature; what a vaſt, univerſal, and judi-

cious *Genius* it requires; what ſurprizing Effects it has had in the World when duly perform'd; what Encouragement it met with among the *Ancients*; and the Reaſons of its declining State among the *Moderns*. Nor do I deſire, even in this, to dictate any Thing, but with all Submiſſion refer what I ſay to the Verdict of better Judgments.

The *Excellency* of the *Epick Poem* appears, in that, as we hinted before, 'tis the Principal, and moſt Sublime Part of all *Poeſie*. 'Tis that on which the moſt Commendations, the higheſt Praiſes, and the largeſt, freſheſt Garlands are, and have been beſtow'd. But this only gives us a general Notion of its *Greatneſs*; we may ſee it in its cleareſt Luſtre, if we would but take a particular View of its Nature and Deſign. And becauſe I cannot expreſs it better and more conciſely in my own, I ſhall make bold to uſe my Author's Words. "The "*Epopœa*, or *Epick Poem* (ſays he) is a "Diſcourſe or Story invented by Art, "to form Mens Manners by ſuch In"ſtructions as are diſguis'd under the "Allegory of ſome one Important Acti"on, which is related in Verſe after

"a

" a probable, diverting, and ſurpri-
" ſing manner.

Here you have a ſhort, but full and clear Idea of the *Nature* and *Deſign* of the *Epick Poem.* I ſhall not here ſpend time to explain the Parts of this Definition, 'tis ſo fully and clearly done in the enſuing Treatiſe, that it needs no farther Illuſtration. Now what, according to this Account, can be more Great and Noble? To regulate Mens Manners; to purge and refine them from the Dregs and Corruptions of Vice; to keep their Paſſions within due Bounds, and to make them the Servants, not the Maſters of right Reaſon, has in all Ages been eſteemed a Piece of the higheſt Prudence, and a great Perfection of humane Nature. Hence the *Moraliſt* himſelf deſervedly derives all his Glory. But if he merits much, the *Epick* Poet merits more. The one indeed by his plain convincing Inſtructions can prevail upon thoſe, whoſe Minds are unprejudic'd, and whoſe Reaſon is rightly inform'd: But the other, by the Charms and Allurements of his Precepts, breaks through all Oppoſition, conquers all Prejudice, inſinuates himſelf into the inmoſt

inmoſt Receſſes of the Soul, and makes a thorough Convert of the moſt obſtinate Immoraliſt. The *Epick* Poet, to confirm all, makes uſe of frequent Examples, the ſtrongeſt Arguments to perſwade Men to be Vertuous; and his whole Piece is an Imitation of ſuch Things as may probably happen. To conclude, He, like a skilful Phyſician, mixes Sweet with Bitter, that which is Pleaſant with the Profitable, and gilds o'er the unſightly Pill, that ſo even the nauſeous but wholeſome Phyſick might ſteal down the better. I know there may be ſome, who utterly diſlike this way, and cry 'tis too Trickiſh, fit only to cajole Women and delude Children. But may I crave leave to tell ſuch, that they ſeem not to have ſtudied Nature ſufficiently, elſe they would have diſcern'd in the moſt ſage Tempers, ſomething of the Child, that loves to be tempted and allur'd even to that which is his own Good and Happineſs. This is conſpicuous to all, who are acquainted with the World a little, and have read Men as well as Books: So that I need not prove what is ſo notoriouſly apparent. I am ſenſible much more might

might be ſaid to ſhew the *Excellency* of the *Epick Poem*; but that little which has been already *alledg'd* in its favour, may, I preſume, be enough to keep up its Eſteem among the more judicious Part of the World: And as for others, of a more perverſe Principle, though never ſo much were ſaid, it would not ſatisfie them.

But to go on; it is no ſmall Commendation to the *Epick Poem*, that its nature is ſuch as requires the largeſt, moſt univerſal and judicious *Genius* to undertake it. None but Men of the moſt exalted Senſe, warmeſt Thoughts, livelieſt Fancies, and deepeſt Judgments, are fit for ſo Noble an Enterprize. Every Man, we ſee, who has but an ordinary Capacity, thinks himſelf Scholar enough to be a Phyſician, a Lawyer, or a Divine: But the poor Pretender is a little more modeſt in his Pretences to *Epick Poetry*. Here he ſtands off, and keeps at as awful a diſtance from *Parnaſſus*, as the trembling *Iſraelites* of old did from the burning Mount. Nay, the *Poetaſters* themſelves, who have ventur'd at all the leſſer ſorts of *Poems*, yet knowing their own ſtrength, have with all

all Reverence receeded from ſo high an Undertaking.

So vaſt a *Genius* does this ſort of *Poetry* require, that if we will rely on the Teſtimony of *Rapin*, one of the ableſt and moſt impartial Criticks this, or any other Age ſince *Ariſtotle* and *Horace*, has produced, we ſhall find that there have been only two, *Homer* and *Virgil*, who have wrote in this Way with any tolerable Succeſs. This Judicious Critick mentions ſeveral of the *Greek* Poets, ſuch as *Coluthus*, who wrote of the Rape of *Hellen*; *Tryphiodorus*, who gives an Account of the taking of *Troy*; *Muſæus*, who wrote the Hiſtory of *Leander*; *Apollonius Rhodius*, who relates the Expedition of the *Argonauts*; *Quintus Calaber*, who undertook to write the Supplement to the *Iliad* and *Odyſſeis*; and *Nonnus*, who wrote the Hiſtory of the Birth, Adventures, Victories, and Apotheoſis of *Bacchus*: He likewiſe mentions ſeveral of the *Latin* Poets, ſuch as *Lucan*, *Statius*, *Silius Italicus*, *Valerus Faccus*, and *Claudian*; but withal takes Notice how far ſhort all theſe fall of the Perfections of the other two. As for the *Moderns*, he takes

Notice

Notice of ſeveral among the *Italians*, namely *Dante*, *Petrarch*, *Boccace*, *Boyardo*, *Oliviero*, *Arioſto*, *Taſſo*, *Sannazarius* and *Vida*; but he thinks the three firſt deſerve not the very Name of *Heroick* Poets; and as for the reſt, he has obſerv'd ſo many Imperfections in them, that they can ſtand in no manner of Competition with *Homer* and *Virgil*, whom at leaſt they have pretended to imitate. Among the *Spaniards* he only mentions *Camoens* a *Portugueſe*, and ſays, "He only regarded to expreſs the "Haughtineſs of this Nation in his "Poem of the *Conqueſt of the Indies*: "And that he is fierce and faſtuous in "his Compoſition, but has *little Diſ-* "*cernment*, and *little Conduct*." Nor "does this Ingenuous Critick favour his own Countrymen, *Dubartas* and *Ronſard*; but taxes them with ſuch Imperfections, that one may reaſonably diſpute with them the Name of *Epick* Poets. If you would be ſatisfied more particularly in this Point, I muſt refer you to the *Reflections*, which *Rapin* has made upon the *Epick* Poets in all Ages: And there you will perceive what a vaſt Difference he makes between *Homer* and *Virgil*,

Virgil, and all the reſt that wrote after them. *Homer* (ſays he) *animates me*, Virgil *heats me, and all the reſt freeze me, ſo cold and flat are they*

He has not indeed made any Reflections on our *Engliſh* Poets, and this *Rymer* preſumes proceeded from his Ignorance of our Language, which he did not underſtand ſo well, as to paſs a Judgment on what was writ in it. Whereupon *Rymer* himſelf has undertook to criticiſe upon them. *Chaucer*, he will not allow for an *Epick* Poet, the Age he lived in not being ſufficient for a great Deſign; being an Age of Tales, Ballads and Roundelays. *Spencer*, whom he reckons the firſt of our *Heroick* Poets, yet falls under his Cenſure, and is tax'd for his want of a true Idea, for his rambling after marvellous Adventures, for making no Conſcience of Probability, for making his Poem a perfect *Fairy-Land*, and for his unlucky Choice of the Stanza, which in no wiſe is proper for our Language. Sir *William D'venant* is the next *Heroick* Poet our *Engliſh Critick* takes Notice of. He acknowledges that his Wit was well known; that in his Preface to his *Gondibert*, appear ſome Strokes

of

of an extraordinary Judgment; that he is ſaid to have a particular Talent for the *Manners*; that his Thoughts are great; and laſtly, that there appears ſomething roughly Noble throughout this *Fragment*. Yet after all, he blames him, for the ill Choice of his Subject; for his bad Conduct; for a vicious Oeconomy; and for his unhappy Choice of the *Tetraſtick*. *Cowley* is the third and laſt *Heroick* Poet, our Author mentions, and to him he gives particular Commendations. He ſays, "That a "more Happy *Genius* for *Heroick Poeſie* "appears in *Cowley*; that he underſtood "the Purity, the Perſpicuity, the Ma-"jeſty of the Stile and the Vertue of "Numbers; that he could diſcern "what was beautiful and pleaſant "in Nature; and could expreſs his "Thoughts without the leaſt Difficulty "or Conſtraint; that he underſtood to "diſpoſe of the Matters, and to manage "Digreſſions; and laſtly, that he "underſtood *Homer* and *Virgil*, and as "prudently made his Advantage of "them." Yet after all theſe high Commendations, he laments his not carrying on the Work ſo far as he deſign'd,

and

and his not living to reviſe what he did leave behind him: And blames him for his ill Choice of the *Subject* of his Poem, in that like *Lucan* he made Choice of *Hiſtory*, and a Hiſtory where he was ſo ſtrictly ty'd up to the Truth. He likewiſe blames him for inſerting the *Lyrick* Meaſure in the very Body of His Poem. Thus far the Judicious *Rymer* goes; and it were to be wiſh'd he had paſſed his Judgment on the famous *Milton*, another of our *Engliſh* Poets; but ſince he has wav'd ſaying any thing about him, till ſome other time, I ſhall crave leave to inſert the Opinion of *Dryden*, a profeſs'd Poet, and as great a Judge of Poetry. He tells us in his *Dedication before the Tranſlation of Juvenal*, "That *Mil-*
"*ton* had a *Genius* equal to *Spencer*'s,
"and greater than that of *Cowley*; that
"his Thoughts are elevated, his Words
"ſounding, and that no Man has ſo
"happily copy'd the Manner of *Homer*;
"or ſo copiouſly tranſlated his *Greciſms*,
"and the *Latin Elegancies* of *Virgil*."
But then he ſays likewiſe, "That
"his Subject is not that of an *Heroick*
"Poem, properly ſo called; it being
"the loſing of our Happineſs, where

"the

" the Event is not proſperous like that " of other *Epick* Works: That his " heavenly *Machines* are too many in " Proportion to the human Perſonages, " which are but two: That he runs in- " to a Flat of Thought, ſometimes for a " Hundred Lines together: That he " was tranſported too far in the uſe of " Obſolete Words: And laſtly, that " he can by no means approve of his " Choice of *Blank Verſe.*" By this ſhort View of our *Engliſh* Poets, which I have abſtracted from *Rymer* and *Dryden*, one may clearly perceive how far ſhort even they as well as their Neighbours have fell of the Excellencies and Perfections of *Homer* and *Virgil.*

But I muſt not leave Matters thus. For ſince my tranſlating *Boſſu*, and the Thoughts I had of publiſhing it, the World has been honour'd with an Excellent *Heroick Poem* in *Engliſh*, done by our own Country-man the Learned and Ingenious Dr. *Blackmore*: Which puts us *Now* upon thinking that the Poems of the two *Ancients* are not wholly unimitable. It may therefore be expected that in a Preface of this Nature, and in this Part of it where we are treating of the

the Vaſtneſs of the *Genius* that is requiſite for *Epick Poeſie*, ſomething ſhould be ſaid on the *Genius* of that Author.

'Tis far from my Deſign to ſet up for a profeſt *Critick*, but that I may do ſome Juſtice to the Merits of that great Man, ſince no one elſe, as I hear of, has as yet criticis'd publickly on the *Poem*, I ſhall venture to give the World a Taſte of the Thoughts I have conceiv'd of it in general. And a Taſte it muſt only be, ſince the Limits of a Preface, and the Senſe I have of my own Inability in paſſing a Judgment upon ſo great an Author, do ſufficiently excuſe me from being more minute and particular, leaving that Task wholly to abler Judges in *Poetry*.

This therefore muſt be own'd by all, that he has made a happy Choice of his *Subject* and *Heroe*, whereby he ſignalizes his own Country; which is more than any of our *Engliſh* Poets have done before him, beſides the *Romantick Spencer*. He profeſſes in his Preface to have imitated *Virgil* in his Deſign, and how well he has copy'd that great Model let us now ſee. If we will examine Things according to the Rules *Boſſu* has laid down,

down, his *Fable* will appear to be exactly the ſame with that of the *Æneid.* His *Action* is like that of the *Latin* Poet, *One*, *Entire*, *Noble*, *Great* and *Important Action*, viz. The Reſtoration of a decay'd Church and State to its ancient Splendor and Glory. The *Intrigues* he makes uſe of to hinder his Heroe from accompliſhing his great and good Deſigns are of the very ſame make with thoſe of *Virgil.* For as in the One, *Juno*, who had equal Power both by Sea and Land, raiſes all the Obſtacles, that lay in the way of the *Trojan* Heroe: So in the other, *Lucifer* the Prince of the Air, equal in Power to *Juno*, raiſes all the Storms by Sea, and all the Diſturbances by Land, that hindred the Settlement of our *Britiſh* Heroe. And as the *Intrigues*, ſo the *Solution* or *Unravelling* of theſe *Intrigues* are as juſt, as regular, and as natural as thoſe in the *Æneid.* In his *Inſcription* or *Title* he has follow'd *Homer* in his *Odyſſeis*, and *Virgil* in his *Æneid*, who have both inſcrib'd their Poems with their *Heroe's Name.* His *Propoſition* is as full, but withal as modeſt both with reſpect to himſelf and his Heroe, as *Horace* requires,

quires, and *Virgil* has practis'd. His *Invocation* is much the same with that of the *Æneid*, and therein he has like *Virgil* inserted * his Heroe's Character. The *Narration* of our *English* Poet (bating some few Defects, which we shall mention by and by) is as exact as that of the *Latin*: And has in a great measure all those Qualifications which *Bossu* says are requisite thereto; for it is *Pleasant*, *Probable*, *Moving*, *Marvellous*, and *Active*. The *Manners* of his human Personages, their Interests, and Designs, are as regularly order'd, as those in *Virgil*'s Poem. All the *Characters* are nobly drawn, and look like the curious Strokes of a great Master; for they all tend to, and center in the General Character of the Poem and Heroe, namely, in that noble Ornament of the Soul, *GENEROSITY*. His *Machines* are very natural, and adapted to the *Genius* and Notions of our Times, as *Virgil*'s were to those of his Age. His *Expression* is Noble and Majestical; his *Verse* Sonorous, Masculine, and

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* *The Generous Briton.*

Strong;

Strong; his *Thoughts* are Sublime; his *Similes* Natural; his *Deſcriptions* Proper; and his *Sentences* Few and Regular. In a word, throughout the whole he ſeems in a great Meaſure to have confin'd himſelf to the * Rules of *Ariſtotle* and *Horace*, to have copy'd the beſt of any Man the Perfections of *Virgil*, and to have ſhewn a Strength of *Genius*, an Heighth of *Fancy*, and a Correctedneſs of *Judgment*, that comes but a little behind that of the two *Ancient* Poets.

But after all it muſt be ſaid (though with ſome ſort of Reluctancy) that there are ſome few Things which need poliſhing, and which after ſecond and more deliberate Thoughts, that great Maſter would no doubt have corrected. For one may queſtion whether his *Digreſſions* are not too tedious, and ſometimes foreign to the Subject: Eſpecially that of *Prince Arthur*'s Speech to King *Hoel*, which takes up two whole Books. For

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* *Which may be one great Argument to prove that the Writing according to the Rules of* Ariſtotle *and* Horace *is no ſuch Clog to a Poet's Fancy as ſome pretend.*

what

what relation has this Recital of the Creation of the World; of the Fall of Man; of his Redemption; of the Reſurrection; of the Laſt Judgment, and the like, with the main Action of the Poem; which is the reſtoring Religion and Liberty to the *Britiſh* Nation, and ſettling both Church and State on their ancient Foundations of Truth and Peace? I know it may be ſaid in favour of it, that it was neceſſary for the Converſion of *Hoel*, that ſuch an Account of Things ſhould be given him. But would not a bare Recital of a few Lines, that ſuch a Relation was given him, have been ſufficient? And would not ſuch a Conduct have been more conformable to the Nature of *Epick Poeſie*, which excludes every Thing that is foreign to the main Purpoſe?

They who think to ſalve this by ſaying, that this Speech is in Imitation of *Æneas*'s Speech to *Dido*, will be owned by all that have read and compar'd both, to be egregiouſly miſtaken, and the Author himſelf has no reaſon to thank them for making ſuch a ridiculous Compariſon. There is no manner of Likeneſs between theſe two Speeches.

The

The one, namely that of *Æneas*, is a ſtory of whatever had happen'd to him for ſix Years together ſince the taking of *Troy*, and 'tis from that time the *Action* of the Poem begins: But the *Narration* of Prince *Arthur* is a Relation of Things, wherein he had no more Intereſt than any other ordinary Man and Chriſtian; and were we to reckon the *Duration* of the *Action*, from the time whereby the Poet begins this Speech, as all *Criticks* have done that of the *Æneid*, it would not be the *Action* of ſix or ſeven Years, but of ſix times as many Ages. There is no Compariſon then to be made between theſe two Speeches; but that of our *Engliſh* Poet is wholly a *Digreſſion*, and the other neceſſary and eſſential to the *Æneid*. That which our Author deſign'd to anſwer the Speech of *Æneas* to *Dido*, is doubtleſs the Speech of one of Prince *Arthur*'s Attendants, *Lucius*, to King *Hoel*: As appears if we compare the Beginning of this Speech to the Beginning of that in the *Æneid*. *Lucius* begins thus:

How ſad a Task do your Commands impoſe,
That muſt renew unſufferable Woes?
That muſt our Grief with ſad Affliction feed,
And make your generous Heart with pity bleed.
Whilſt I the diſmal Scenes of Ills diſcloſe,
And bleeding Albion's *ghaſtly Wounds expoſe.*
The Cruel Foes in telling would relent,
And with their Tears, the Spoils they caus'd, lament.
Pity would Picts *and* Saxon *Breaſts invade,*
And make them mourn, o'er the dire Wounds they made.
But ſince you're pleas'd to hear our Countryes Fate,
I'll pay Obedience, and our Woes relate.

Now all this is an exact Copy of the Beginning of *Æneas*'s Speech to *Dido*, which runs thus:

Infandum, Regina, jubes renovare dolorem:
Trojanas ut opes & lamentabile regnum
Eruerint

Errarint Danai, quæque ipse miserrima vidi,
Et quorum pars magna fui. Quis talia fando,
Myrmidonum, Dolopumve, aut duri miles Ulyssei,
Temperet à Lacrymis? Et jam nox humida cœlo
Præcipitat, suadentque cadentia Sydera somnos.
Sed si tantus amor casus cognoscere nostros,
Et breviter Trojæ supremum audire laborem,
Quanquam animus meminisse horret, luctuque refugit: Incipiam.

In this Speech *Blackmore*, in my Opinion, is more lucky in the Choice of his Speaker than *Virgil* was; For doubtless 'tis more for the Honour of the Herœ, at least more agreeable to the Notions and Religion of our Times, and greater Advantages might be drawn from another Person's telling his Adventures, than if he himself were the Relater of them. But even in this Speech our *English* Poet seems not to be so regular as is requisite. *Lucius* begins

too high in his Narration. * *Æneas* begins his recital at the Building of the *Wooden Horse*, and the taking of *Troy*; this is regular, and answers exactly to what *Dido* had desir'd of him. But *Lucius*, though *Hoel* only desir'd him to relate *Prince Arthur*'s *Story, and King Uter's Fate*, tells him of the Decay of old *Rome*; of the *Britains* shaking off the *Roman* Yoke; how they were invaded by the *Scots* and *Picts*; that at last they were forc'd to send to the *Saxons* for their Assistance, who instead of Friends became their Masters; and then he comes to relate what was requir'd. Now all that is said before the Account of King *Uter*'s fighting with the *Saxons*, and his Overthrow, is preliminary and wholly foreign to the main Action. For if we will compute the *Duration* of the *Action* of Prince *Arthur*, according to the Rules by which we compute the *Duration* of the *Action* of the *Æneid*, we must reckon, that it lasted from the Death of King *Uter*, and the Overthrow of his Army, which put Prince *Arthur*

* Fracti bello, fatisq; repulsi Ductores Danaum, tot jam labentibus annis, Instarmontis equum, &c. *Æn.* 2.

upon

upon travelling into *Neuſtria*; until the Death of *Tollo*, which wholly made way for the reſettlement of Prince *Arthur*. Theſe are my Thoughts, but perhaps the Author had other Deſigns in his Head, particularly that of Preaching Morality and Religion to an Immoral and Irreligious Age; which ſeems in a great meaſure to excuſe his long Digreſſions.

Again, one may queſtion whether moſt of his *Deſcriptions* are not too long, and whether if our *Engliſh* Poet had beſtow'd as much Pains, and ſpent as much time about his Poem, as *Virgil* did about his *Æneid*, he would not have ſhortn'd his *Deſcriptions*, avoided Repetitions of the ſame Things, and been more correct throughout the Whole.

Laſtly, It is urg'd by ſome, that he has but a few *Epiſodes* in Compariſon to *Virgil*, and it ſeems probable to me, that this Thinneſs of *Epiſodes* has oblig'd him to be ſo long and tedious in his *Deſcriptions* and *Digreſſions*; elſe his Poem would have taken up but a little Compaſs. Theſe are all the Faults that I think are worth taking notice of. There are indeed other little Slips, which

touch not the Eſſence and Bottom of the *Fable* and *Poem*, therefore I ſhall not mention them. Nor are thoſe I have mention'd ſuch as caſt any great diſcredit upon our *Engliſh* Poet: For notwithſtanding all that has been ſaid, ſpite of Ill-nature, Envy, and Detraction, he may juſtly be reckon'd the *Next* to, though not an *Equal*, with *Homer* and *Virgil*.

Having thus taken a ſhort View of the Poets of all Ages, and of almoſt all the polite Countries in the World, and having found how far ſhort all of them, even *Blackmore* himſelf, fall of the Perfections and Excellencies of the other *Two*, it may ſeem neceſſary to decide a Controverſie that has aroſe among the Learned, whether *Homer* or *Virgil* had the greater *Genius*, and which of them deſerv'd the greater Applauſe. We find them divided into Parties about it, ſome declaring in favour of the *One*, ſome in favour of the *Other*. But without detracting from either, we may venture to ſay that each of them had their peculiar Excellencies, which the other had not. If *Homer* was the firſt Model of this Way, yet *Virgil* was under

ſuch

ſuch Circumſtances as gave him not only the Glory of well copying ſo great a Pattern, but even of a primary Invention. If the *Firſt* had more Flame, the *Laſt* had more Phlegm, and tho' the Poems of the one had more Spirit in them, yet the *Æneid* of the other was more Correct. On the other Hand, if we do not meet with thoſe perfect Heroe's, and thoſe noble Ideas of Vertue in *Homer*, as are to be ſeen in *Virgil*, 'tis to be attributed more to the Unhappineſs and Imperfections of the Times the *Greek* Poet liv'd in, than to any want of Judgment and Skill. In a word, they are both excellent in their kind; and if *Homer* ſeems better than *Virgil*, 'tis becauſe it was his Fortune to be born firſt: As on the contrary, if any one thinks the *Latin* Poet to be beſt, 'tis becauſe he had ſo excellent a Model to imitate. However the Caſe is, yet 'tis evident they both had large *Genius*'s, and ſuch as no others, as we know of, could ſtand in Competition with.

Now it is not to be wonder'd at, if by the great Performances of ſuch an extraordinary *Genius* as animated *Homer* and *Virgil*, many great, extraordinary

and almoſt miraculous *Effects* were produc'd. Love, Admiration, and Eſteem were the common Tributes which the Vulgar paid to the Venerable Name of Poet. They were ſo charm'd with the Sweetneſs of all Poetical Compoſures, that they look'd upon what the Poet ſaid as Divine, and gave the ſame Credit to it, as to an Oracle. Hence it came to paſs that all the Poets Writings were among the Heathen reckon'd as ſo many *Leſſons* or *Sermons of Morality*, which poliſh'd the Manners, ſmooth'd the Temper, and civiliz'd the Diſpoſition of the moſt Barbarous Nations. Nor is it unreaſonable to imagine that even the Refinedneſs of *Athens* was owing more to the *Poets*, than to the *Philoſophers* Inſtructions. Of all that has been ſaid in favour of the Poets, *Homer* may claim a great Share, ſince if we will believe *Horace* in the Caſe, his * Writings were more inſtructive and uſeful, for the Conduct of human Life, than the Precepts of even the beſt Moral

* Plenius ac melius Chryſippo aut Crantore dicit *Ep. ad Loll.*

Philoſophers. 'Tis to be confeſſed, we are in the dark, as to what *Effects* his two Poems had in the Age he liv'd in: But this we know, that in After-Ages they have been had in univerſal Eſteem, and will always be admir'd as long as Learning and Good-Manners have any Repute in the World. The ſame may be ſaid of *Virgil*: For the more any Age increaſes in ſound Knowledge, and ingenious Literature, the more to be ſure will his Poem be had in Admiration. Beſides, it ſeems to have had a ſtrange and peculiar Effect in the Age, and upon the State he liv'd under. For 'tis more than probable that the publiſhing of his *Æneid* conduc'd very much to the ſettling *Auguſtus* on the Imperial Throne. We know what a ſtrange Averſion the *Romans* had to the very Name of Monarchy, and 'tis not likely they would ſo ſoon have exchang'd their belov'd *Democracy* for that which they ſo much hated, had they not been work'd over to it by the Inſtructions of *Virgil*; who informs them, " That when Hea-
" ven decrees to ſettle a State upon
" ſuch or ſuch a Foundation, 'tis A-
" theiſm and Irreligion to oppoſe its

" Deſigns; and ſuch an Affront to the " divine Majeſty and Wiſdom, as ſhould " certainly meet with ſpeedy and con- " dign Puniſhment.

Let us now ſee what *Encouragement* the *Epick* Poets have met with. As for *Homer*, the Times he liv'd in are ſo obſcure, that we can gather nothing of Certainty from *Hiſtory* about him. But 'tis by moſt concluded that he was as Poor as he was Ingenious; And that though many Cities after his Death claim'd him for their own; yet none of them gave the blind Bard that Encouragement he merited whilſt alive. 'Tis likely he was admir'd and eſteem'd by all, but receiv'd no other Reward that we know of, for his Deſerts, but what our poor *Spencer* did; namely, a Courtiers Smile, inſignificant Promiſes, and a few fawning Compliments. *Virgil* had the luck to live in better Times; for he met with a *Mecœnas*, who honour'd him with his Favour, encourag'd him with his Gifts, and introduc'd him into the Eſteem of *Auguſtus* himſelf. This indeed was ſomething more than the empty Breath of popular Applauſe; and *Parnaſſus* at that time was not ſuch a ſtar-

a ſtarving, barren Soil, as before and afterwards it prov'd. Then Poets were had in Admiration, and every one receiv'd that Recompence, which was their Due. This was the Poets Golden Age, and all other Polite Learning met with ſuch ample Encouragement, as made it flouriſh more under the Reign of *Auguſtus*, than in after Ages, even to the Honour and Admiration of thoſe, and to the Diſgrace and Reproach of ſucceeding Times. There have been indeed ſome Intervals ſince, wherein Poets have met with their due Rewards. *Arioſto* and *Taſſo* are ſaid to have met with their *Patrons*, who accepted of their Pieces, and recompenc'd their Labours. And in *France*, *Richlieu* was a great and never-failing Friend to the *Muſes* and their Votaries. But at other times the poor Bards have been left to feed upon the empty Air of Vulgar Fame. For a Proof of this, we need only have recourſe to the Poets of our own Nation, who whilſt living have moſt of them met with the ſame Fate as their Fore-Father *Homer*; tho' when Dead they have like him been even Idoliz'd. But this *Poſthumous Fame* is but a poor Subſiſtence

for

for a living Poet: And this gives us a juſt Occaſion to enquire into the Reaſons of the declining State of *Epick Poetry* among the *Moderns*, eſpecially in our own Nation.

One would wonder how it comes to paſs, that in ſuch an Age as this, wherein all manner of Polite Learning ſhines with as great a Luſtre, as it did in the Reign of *Auguſtus*, *Epick Poetry* ſhould be the only ſlighted and neglected thing. But for all our Wonder, Experience ſhews us, that 'tis ſo far diſregarded by the Learned World, that few or none, tho' duly qualified, will venture upon ſuch an Undertaking; and there are but a few likewiſe that underſtand the true Nature and Deſign of an *Epick Poem*.

There have been many Reaſons brought to prove it next to impoſſible for one of our *Modern* Poets to write a true *Heroick* Poem, ſuch a one as *Homer* and *Virgil* have wrote. Some of theſe Reaſons I ſhall juſt mention, and prove them to be only Pretences at the beſt; and then I ſhall make bold to propoſe ſome other Reaſons of the declining State of *Heroick Poetry* in our Times, which

which perhaps may ſeem to the unprejudic'd Reader to be of more weight and conſequence, than any that have as yet been alledg'd.

Firſt of all 'tis objected by ſome, *That we want due Matter for an Heroick Poem*: That is, the *Hiſtory* of our Nation is not able to furniſh us with an *Action* or an *Heroe* that is fit for ſuch a Poem. Were we indeed to judge of this by the Practiſe of Sir *William D'Avenant* and Mr. *Cowley*, who have each of them made choice of a *Subject* and *Heroe*, that has nothing to do with the *Engliſh* Nation, we might then be inclin'd to ſuppoſe it was for want of due and juſt *Matter* in our own *Annals*. But I think they had no need of ſearching into Foreign *Hiſtory* for their *Actions* and *Heroe's*, ſince they might with more Credit to themſelves, and with more Honour to their Country, have met with both nigher Home. 'Tis certain our own *Hiſtory* could have furniſh'd them with as juſt a *Subject* for *Heroick* Poetry, as any other. Experience has ſhewn us ſince, by the happy Choice Dr. *Blackmore* has made of Prince *Arthur*, that our *Annals* are not ſo barren

of

of Great and Noble *Actions* and *Heroes*, as ſome would pretend. It argues then great Ignorance, or at leaſt great Negligence in the ſearch of our *Records* to ſay, *That we want due Matter for an Heroick Poem.*

Again, 'tis objected by others, *That we want Genius for ſuch an Undertaking.* This indeed is a weightier Reaſon than the former, and if true, would ſilence all our Pretences to *Epick* Poetry. Sir *William Temple* in his *Eſſay of Ancient and Modern Learning*, preſſes this Argument very ſtrongly againſt the *Modern Poets.* But without any Offence to that great Man, it may be juſtly affirm'd, That this laſt Age has produc'd as many great and noble *Genius*'s, as any other Age before it: So that had they been inclin'd to *Epick* Poetry, and received any Encouragement that way, they might no queſtion have come off with the ſame Succeſs as they have in the *Drama.* Sir *William* will not allow our *Moderns* to be any more than *Dwarfs* in Learning, when compar'd to the *Ancients*; and then, by a pretty ſort of Allegory, he goes about to prove, that they with all the Advantages

tages of writing after the *Ancients*, cannot make ſo great a Progreſs in Learning as thoſe did. I ſhall not trouble my ſelf with refuting his Aſſertion, ſince that is done already by Mr. *Wootton* in his *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, wherein he ſufficiently proves the *Moderns* to be as tall in Learning, if not taller, than Sir *William*'s *Giants* were; and that 'tis not want of *Genius*, but ſome Accidental Circumſtances, which make the Men of this Age come behind thoſe of former Times in *Oratory* and *Poetry*.

Another Objection is, *our Defect of Numbers, and that our Language is not proper for Heroick Poetry.* This is what *Wootton* himſelf urges in his *Reflections*, when he will not allow the former Reaſon to hold good. He tells us there, "That the *Greek* was ſo "ſmooth, ſoft, and ductile, that *Homer* had great Encouragement even "from his Language, to ſet about an "*Heroick* Poem: That the *Latin* was "Majeſtical and Stately, but withal "ſo rough, that *Virgil* had much ado "to run it down to Verſe: But that our "*Modern* Languages are all ſo harſh

"and

" and unmalleable, that the Poets have " no Encouragement to form any thing " that is great out of them." This, if I miſtake not his Senſe, is the Force of his Objection. But it may be reply'd, That tho' our Language is not ſo ſmooth and ſonorous as the *Greek*, yet it comes the next to it of any Language. 'Tis well known how it has been refining ever ſince *Waller*'s and *Cowley*'s Time, and it ſeems at preſent to be almoſt arriv'd to its Purity and Perfection. * *Dryden* calls it a *Noble Language*, and is only ſorry we have not a more certain Meaſure of it, as they have in *France*, where they have an *Academy* erected for that Purpoſe, and endowed with large Privileges by the preſent King. *Rapin* himſelf acknowledges the Majeſty of our Language, *which*, he ſays, *is proper for great Expreſſions*: *Rymer* compares the *Spaniſh*, the *Italian*, the *French*, and the *German*, to our Language, and prefers the *Engliſh* to all the reſt; which, he ſays, has a Weight, Fullneſs,

* *Dryd. Dedic. to the E. of* Orrery *before the Rival Ladies.*

Vigour,

Vigour, Force, Gravity, and Fitneſs for *Heroick Poeſie*, above all other Languages. How true this is, appears from the daily Writings of our Poets, and eſpecially from ſome of *Dryden*'s Poems, and *Blackmore*'s Prince *Arthur*, where their Expreſſion is lofty and majeſtical, the Verſe ſmooth and ſtrong, and the Numbers truly harmonious, and befitting their reſpective Deſigns. I ſhall only add the Opinion of *Roſcommon* in the Caſe, who ſpeaking in Commendation of the *Engliſh* Language, makes it by much to be Superiour to the *French*. His Words are theſe:

But who did ever in French *Authors ſee*
The Comprehenſive Engliſh *Energy?*
The weighty Bullion *of one* Sterling *Line,*
Drawn to French *Wire, would through whole Pages ſhine.*
I ſpeak my Private, but Impartial Sence,
With Freedom, and (I hope) without Offence:
For I'll recant, when France *can ſhew me Wit,*
As ſtrong as ours, *and as ſuccinctly writ.*
[Roſcommon's *Eſſay on Tranſlated Verſe.*]

Laſtly,

Laſtly, 'tis objected, "*That we want the Benefit of Machines*; which the Heathen Poets made ſo great uſe of, and with which their Poems were full from one End to the other: That the Notions and Religion of our Times exclude all manner of Miracles, and the extraordinary Preſence of the *Heathen* Gods from having any thing to do in the ordinary Courſe of humane Affairs, which we believe now to be govern'd only by one common *Providence*; and that upon this Account it ſeems altogether unpracticable for any of our *Modern* Poets to write an *Heroick* Poem like to thoſe of *Homer* and *Virgil*." This Objection is duly ſtated, and fully anſwer'd by Mr. *Dryden* in his *Dedication before the Tranſlation of Juvenal*. There he tells us, That our Religion does indeed debar the Poet from making uſe of *Jupiter*, *Juno*, *Minerva*, *Venus*, or any others of the *Heathen Deities*: But that this is made up to the Poet another way; that 'tis not contrary to Chriſtianity to believe that there are good and bad Spirits which have ſome ſort of Influence over humane Affairs: And

that

that the Poet may form as juſt *Machines* out of theſe, as the *Ancients* did out of their *Divinities*. This is what *Blackmore* has done even to Admiration, and his Practiſe and Conduct has put it beyond all diſpute, that we may very ſafely and regularly make uſe of *Machines*, provided they are ſuch as are ſuited to the Notions and Religion of our Times.

Theſe are the principal Objections I thought fit to mention, which are not ſuch ſolid Reaſons as ſome may imagine: I ſhall now according to my Promiſe propoſe ſome others, which I think to be more ſubſtantial; but withal I muſt reſerve to my ſelf my firſt Caution, namely, that I deſign to dictate nothing herein, but to lay down my Thoughts as plainly and as clearly as poſſible, and to refer all to the Verdict of better Judgments.

Firſt then I ſay, That one great Reaſon of that general Diſeſteem which *Epick* Poetry lies under, and of its declining State among the Moderns, ſeems to be *the Degeneracy of the preſent Age*. We are fall'n at laſt into ſuch unhappy Times, wherein Men are as averſe

verſe to the Precepts of *Morality*, which the *Epick Poet* writes, as they are to the Leſſons of *Divinity*, which the *Preacher* every Day inculcates. We do indeed read *Homer* and *Virgil*; but then 'tis not with a Deſign, like the Bee, to ſuck the Honey out of them, but in Imitation of more ſordid Creatures, to extract all the Venom we can, in order to corrupt our Manners, and give a Guſt to our Debaucheries. We are glad to find any Paſſage in them that may ſeem to favour our Licentiouſneſs, and even thoſe that are deſign'd to be our Phyſick, we, like Men of a ſick Stomach, turn all into rank Poyſon. Now no wonder if when our Palates are thus vitiated we have no Reliſh for the wholeſome Inſtructions of *Epick Poetry*. Poets then, to pleaſe the Humour of the Age, are forced to write in their Way, eſpecially ſuch of them as have not Souls great enough to ſtem the Torrent of ſo univerſal a Vice. Hence it comes to paſs that we have ſo many vile *Plays* acted on the Stage, wherein Vice is ſet off with all the Luſtre, and recommended with all the Endearments that a corrupted *Poet's Wit* can invent,

or

or the most loose *Debauchee* could have desir'd. Thus both *Poets* and *Audience*, by an unheard-of Complaisance, contribute to the Ruine and Corruption of each others Manners.

Another great Reason of the declining State of *Epick* Poetry, and of the Degeneracy of all other sorts of Poetry, is *the want of due Encouragement*. This is the true Ground of all our Grievances; and till this be provided against, 'tis to be fear'd nothing that is Great, Noble, Vertuous, and truly Good, will ever be produc'd by our Modern Poets. *Athens* and *Rome* made their Poets the Pensioners of their State, and maintain'd them honourably out of the Publick Treasury. Hence it was they never ventur'd, at least not in the most Primitive Times of Poetry, to write any thing wich might reflect upon the Government they liv'd under, or upon the Gods they worshipp'd. But now with us the Poet meets with no Encouragement, and only *One Lawreat* is maintain'd at the publick Charge. Upon this Account it is that Men of Large Souls, who cannot condescend to humour the Vulgar in their Licentiousness,

neſs, turn the Bent of their Studies another Way, and fly *Parnaſſus* as they would the moſt dangerous Contagion. Others of a more pliable Temper take up with the *Stage*, and that they may receive ſome Profit themſelves, ſtudy not to profit, ſo much as they do to pleaſe their Audience, and that in their lewd Way too. But is it not a burning Shame that ſuch a Noble *Genius* as *Dryden*, and others, that ſeem to be made for greater Deſigns, ſhould be forc'd to a fatal Dilemma, either to truckle to a *Play-houſe* for the uncertain Profit of a *third Day*, or to ſtarve for want of other reaſonable Encouragement? But 'tis hop'd on all Hands, that under the Reign of one that may truly be term'd another *Auguſtus*, and under the Patronage of one that may as juſtly be ſtil'd a *Second Mecœnas*, *Poetry* will regain its ancient Privileges, and *Epick Poets* receive that publick and due Encouragement they really deſerve.

The third and laſt Reaſon I ſhall mention for the declining State of *Epick* Poetry among the *Moderns* is, *their notorious neglect of following the*

 Rules

Rules which Ariſtotle *and* Horace *have preſcrib'd*: This, and not want of *Genius*, has been the true Cauſe why ſeveral of our *Engliſh Epick Poets* have ſucceeded ſo ill in their Deſigns. *Rymer* urges this very ſtrongly againſt *Spencer* himſelf, whom at the ſame time he acknowledges to have had a large Soul, a ſharp Judgment, and a *Genius* for *Heroick* Poeſie, perhaps above any that ever writ ſince *Virgil*. For no queſtion but his following an unfaithful Guide, his rambling after marvellous Adventures, his making no Conſcience of Probability, and almoſt all his other Faults, proceeded from one and the ſame Cauſe, namely, his neglect of following the Rules of Poetry. The ſame may be ſaid of Sir *William D' Avenant*, and Mr. *Cowley*: For all the Defects *Rymer* charges them with, are wholly owing to the ſame Cauſe. 'Tis likewiſe upon this very account that the Pieces of our *Dramatick* Poets, which are reckon'd to be the beſt Performances of the preſent Age, can ſcarce any of them ſtand the Teſt of a Judicious Eye: And a Man of Senſe that knows *the Art of Poetry*, and has read the Per-

formances

formances of former Ages, cannot but pity the conceited Ignorance and perverſe Pride of our *Modern Poets*, who ſcorn to be confin'd to the *Rules of Art*. They have been told of this often and often, but they think their own Wit is the beſt Judge in the Caſe; and as long as 'tis ſo, there is no hopes of any Amendment, or of any great Productions in Poetry. I know they bring ſeveral Objections againſt Writing according to the Rules, but they are ſo trifling, that I think it not worth while to examine them here: Beſides, all their Objections, at leaſt the weightieſt of them, have been ſtated, examin'd, and refuted in the *Preface before the laſt Tranſlation of* Terence's *Comedies*; ſo that I am ſufficiently excus'd from that needleſs Task.

I ſhall ſhut up all that has been ſaid on *Epick* Poetry, with giving you the Thoughts of a very eminent Perſon of Quality of this preſent Age and Nation; who ſeems to have comprehended all that has been ſaid on this Subject in theſe few Verſes.

By painful Steps we are at laſt got up
Parnaſſus *Hill, on whoſe bright Airy Top*
The Epick Poe s *ſo divinely ſhow,*
And with juſt Pri de behold the reſt below.
Heroick *oems have a juſt Pretence*
To be the utmoſt reach of Humane Sence;
A Work of ſuch ineſtimable Worth,
There are but Two *the World has yet brought forth,*
Homer *and* Virgil: *With what awful ſound*
Do thoſe meer *Words the Ears of* Poets *wound!*
Juſt as a Changeling *ſeems below the reſt*
Of Men, or rather is a two-legg'd Beaſt:
So theſe Gigantick *Souls amaz'd we find*
As much above the reſt of Humane kind.
Nature's *whole Strength* united! *End-leſs Fame,*
And Univerſal Shouts attend their Name.
Read Homer *once, and you can read no more,*
For all things elſe appear ſo dull and poor,
Verſe *will ſeem* Proſe; *yet often on him look,*
And you will hardly need *another Book.*
[*The Earl of* Mulgrave's *Eſſay on Poetry.*]

The PREFACE.

After what has been ſaid in Favour of *Epick Poetry*, it may be expected I ſhould ſay ſomething in behalf of my *Author*, and give the World ſome Account of the Reaſons that induc'd me to tranſlate it: But before I do either, I muſt beg leave to premiſe a Word or two, which to the more Judicious may not ſeem to be a Digreſſion.

To *Criticiſe* upon any Author, is no ſuch eaſie Matter as ſome may imagine: But to paſs a true and impartial Judgment upon the Writings of the *Poets*, may be juſtly reckon'd one of the hardeſt Parts of *Criticiſm*. Every little Pretender is not fit for ſuch an Undertaking. It requires a large but regulated Fancy, a ſound, ſolid, and penetrating Judgment, deep, piercing, and ſteady Thoughts, a long and obſtinate Courſe of Study, much and certain Experience, a clear and perfect Inſight into Poetry and all its Parts; but above all, the utmoſt Stretch of Humanity and good Nature. Every one that reads *Homer* and *Virgil*, cannot be preſum'd to underſtand them perfectly: Nor are all that underſtand theſe Authors to be admitted as competent Judges of their

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Excellencies and Failures. They muſt firſt be Maſters of the forementionʼd Qualities, and then they may begin to *Criticiſe* and *Reflect* upon what they read and thoroughly underſtand. Then they will be able to ſeparate the Droſs from the *Oar*, to diſcern the falſe glittering of the Tinſel from the true Luſtre of the Jewel, and to know what is praiſe-worthy and what is not.

How ſynonymous ſoever the Words may ſeem at firſt hearing, yet unqueſtionably there is as much difference between *Cenſuring* and *Criticiſing*, as there is between a corrupted, ill-natur'd, and a fair impartial Judge. A little Wit, arm'd with a great deal of Malice, will go a great way towards the compoſing a *Cenſurer*: Such a one, I mean, that carps at ev'ry thing he meets with, that would find Faults where there are none, and take ſome ſort of Complacency and Delight in magnifying the ſmalleſt Slips of an Author. But now the true *Critick* is quite another thing; he brings all he reads and reflects on to the *Criterion* of right Reaſon, and to the Standard of Truth. What is excellent and beautiful, he not

only acquits, but highly applauds and commends: What is weak he does all he can in juſtice to conceal or defend; and like a compaſſionate Judge, 'tis with ſome ſort of Reluctance and Regret that he is forc'd at laſt to paſs a *Black* Sentence upon the moſt Criminal Pieces. Such a *Critick* as this is of vaſt uſe to the Commonwealth of Learning, not only for encouraging and countenancing the *Good*, but likewiſe for diſcouraging and deterring the *Bad* Writers: Since the *Excellencies* of the one will be ſure to meet with a due Eſteem; and the *Faults* of the other will, in ſpite of the *Criticks* good Nature, fall under a juſt and ſevere Cenſure. This is that Notion I have of a true and accompliſh'd *Critick:* All others may be term'd *Cenſurers*, *Carpers*, *Momus*s, or by what other Name of Ignominy you pleaſe to give them, but are by no means to be allow'd competent Judges of any Author's Writings.

This Sort of Learning was in no ſmall Eſteem among the Ancients; as is manifeſt from the many curious *Reflections* and uſeful *Criticiſms*, which *Ariſtotle* and *Longinus* among the *Greeks*, *Horace*

Horace and *Petronius* among the *Latins* (not to mention any more) have left behind them. Of latter date the *Italians* and *Spaniards* have ſet up for great *Criticks*; but thoſe among them that have prov'd beſt, are ſuch as have follow'd the Rules and Precepts of *Ariſtotle* and *Horace*, and other great Maſters of Antiquity; whilſt others that have invented any thing of their own, have come off with leſs Judgment and Applauſe. Among the *Engliſh*, there have been but few that merit the Name of *Critick*, in that Senſe I take the Word. Moſt of them are only *Critics* in the worſt Senſe; that is, ſuch as expoſe the *Faults*, but take no notice of the *Excellencies* of Authors. The *Judicious Rymer*, who ſeems to have a particular Talent for *Criticiſing*, yet in my Opinion falls ſhort of being a true *Critick*: And if he will ſtill diſpute that Title with the World, yet he muſt be contented with being reckon'd one of the meaner Sort; ſince 'tis more difficult and honourable to diſcern and commend the *Excellencies*, than 'tis to find out and expoſe the *Failings* of *Shakeſpear*, *Fletcher*, or any other Author. At preſent the

French, ſince the great Encouragement they at firſt receiv'd from the Learned *Richlieu*, ſeem to be uppermoſt in this ſort of Learning: And how dull and inſipid ſoever they are ſaid to be in other Parts, yet in *Criticiſms* they are full of curious Thoughts, and refin'd Reflections. *Rapin*, in all the Reflections he has made, comes off with univerſal Applauſe; but thoſe on *Ariſtotle*'s *Poeſie* ſeem the moſt correct of any. He has reflected on all the Parts of *Poetry*, and deſcends to the more minute and leſſer Pieces of it; which is ſomething more than *Ariſtotle* himſelf has left us.

As for my Author, whom *D'Acier* in his Notes upon *Ariſtotle*'s *Poeſie* calls the *Ingenious and Judicious Boſſu*; he, I ſay, has enlarg'd himſelf upon only one part of *Poeſie*, to wit, the *Epick*. And herein he ties himſelf ſtrictly to a Method, which he as ſtrictly purſues. He profeſſes at the very firſt, to have follow'd the Rules and Precepts of *Ariſtotle* and *Horace*, and the Practice of *Homer* and *Virgil*. Upon ſuch ſure Grounds as theſe he builds all his Notions; and having ſuch Maſters and Patterns to go by, Who can doubt of his Succeſs?

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What he takes from *Ariſtotle* and *Horace*, he explains, improves, and refines: What is his own, though never ſo judicious and rational, he lays down not in a Dogmatical Magiſterial way, but by way of Problem: And what he aſſerts with an Air of Confidence, though not his Maſters Thoughts, yet ſeem to be natural Deductions from what they have wrote about it. 'Tis not to be queſtion'd, but in many Things he diſſents from moſt Mens Opinions; but 'tis to be hop'd, no judicious Perſon will condemn him till he has ſeriouſly weigh'd his Reaſons, and conſider'd the Arguments he uſes to maintain his Cauſe: and then if our *Critick* can be convinc'd of any Error, he is too modeſt not to ſubmit to the Suffrage of better Judgments. But if, on the other Hand, he has Reaſon on his Side, it may with Juſtice be expected, that he will be a Means of opening the Eyes of a great many unprejudic'd Perſons.

His main Deſign of Writing theſe *Reflections* was, as he tells us himſelf, for the ſake of thoſe that read *Virgil*; and to ſuch I dare affirm, that this *Treatiſe* will be of more Uſe than all the Notes

and Comments they have hitherto ſeen. They are uſually ſtuff'd with idle and unprofitable *Remarks* upon *meer Words*; but this full of ingenious *Criticiſms* upon the moſt weighty and important *Things*. How well he has diſcharg'd himſelf, thoſe who carefully read over this Tract of his, will no doubt diſcover; and they will without doubt from thence form a nobler Idea of *Virgil*, and his Deſign, than hitherto they have conceiv'd. If he ſeems, like his Countrymen, to be too Verboſe, 'tis only upon the account of his ſtudying to make all things as plain and as intelligible as may be; and whether that be a real Fault, I leave others to judge. Beſide the uſeful *Reflections* he makes upon the Conduct of *Virgil* in particular, you will find many others, of no leſs Uſe upon the Practice of *Homer*, and upon *Epick* Poetry in general; and now and then ſome that will give you no ſmall Light into the other two Parts of Great Poetry, *Tragedy* and *Comedy*. In a word, he has throughout the Whole acquitted himſelf like a true, judicious, and impartial *Critick*. He commends the Excellencies of the Good, and cenſures the

the Failings of the Worſt Poets with ſuch a Juſtneſs and Moderation, as deſerves a particular Eſteem and Admiration. Tho' *Statius*, *Claudian*, *Lucan*, *Seneca*, and others, fall under his Laſh, ye he meddles with their Faults no farther than his Subject requires, and upon occaſion he gives them their full Commendations: And on the contrary, tho' he beſtows on *Homer* and his admir'd *Virgil* very high and large Encomiums, yet they are no more than the moſt invidious Part of the World have allow'd them; and he often blames both when he cannot in Juſtice excuſe their Failings.

'Tis now high time I ſhould give you ſome Account of the Reaſons that induc'd me to the Tranſlating this Author. One, and not the leaſt, is the Excellency and Uſefulneſs of theſe Reflections, which are too good to be confin'd to a Foreign Language. 'Tis true, *French* is now become faſhionable and common, and ſeems to be as univerſally ſtudied, as *Latin* was formerly; and ev'ry Pretender to Gallantry and good Breeding, pretends at leaſt to be a perfect Maſter and Judge of this Language. But how-

ever, I believe the Language is not ſo familiar, but by a modeſt Computation it may be affirm'd, That a tenth part of thoſe that read *Homer* and *Virgil*, underſtand but very little of it. To ſuch as theſe, this Tranſlation may be of ſome Uſe; and perhaps others who think they already underſtand the *French Tongue*, may be glad to ſee ſo beneficial a Treatiſe in a more familiar and intelligible Language.

Another Reaſon that inclin'd me to this Undertaking is, the Notice I receiv'd that *Virgil* was now ready to be tranſlated into *Engliſh* by an eminent Hand. Before therefore that Tranſlation came out into the World, I could not but think it proper and uſeful to uſher it in by the *Reflections* of ſo able a Critick. And perhaps it may be of ſome Uſe to the underſtanding *Virgil*, when read in our Mother-Tongue. Beſides, it has the Fortune to come out juſt after Dr. *Blackmore's Poem*, and may be of great Uſe to thoſe who have an Inclination to Poetry; for by it they will be able to judge of this *Engliſh* Poet.

As for the *Tranſlation*, you muſt not expect a verbal one; for to that I neither think my ſelf nor any body elſe oblig'd. I have kept as nigh my Author's Sence as poſſible; and perhaps ſome may think I have follow'd him too cloſe. However, I did all I could to render him with all the Perſpicuity which a *Didactick* Stile requir'd: And if that be granted me, I have all I aimed at. Some Terms of Art which *Boſſu* borrow'd from the *Greek*, I was oblig'd to retain as I found them: But doubtleſs, whoever attentively reads what he has ſaid about them, will ſoon find them to be no Myſtery. The *Citations* in the *Margent* (as many as I thought good to make uſe of) are all left in their *Original* Languages: But ſuch as are in the *Text*, I thought would appear beſt in *Engliſh*, unleſs when the Subject requir'd the contrary. For this purpoſe, ſome I made bold to borrow from the Tranſlations that were ready done to my Hands by ſeveral Wits of the Age: Of the reſt, ſome I tranſlated my ſelf; and others more difficult, I got an ingenious Friend of mine to turn for me.

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This is all the Account I think fit to give you of my Reaſons for Tranſlating *Boſſu*, and of the Method I have taken therein. Whatever Pains and Precaution I have us'd, I do not expect I ſhall pleaſe every body, and 'tis a Wonder if I ſhould. Some will cenſure the Author, others the Tranſlation, and a third ſort perhaps, ſtirr'd up with a generous kind of Envy call'd *Emulation*, will either endeavour to Tranſlate it better themſelves, or elſe vent ſome new Notions of their own. However it happen, the World will be the better for it, and my Author and I ſhall have this Satisfaction, that the Commonwealth of Learning will be then engag'd to thank us not only for our own mean, but even for their more elaborate Productions.

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DISCOURSE

OF.....

To MONSIEUR the Abbot

Knight of *Morſan.*

SIR,

Come from reading the *Treatiſe of Epick Poetry*, wrote by the Reverend Father *Boſſu*, and I have read it with ſo much Satisfaction, that to continue the extreme Pleaſure which the reading of this Work hath given me, I have a mind to employ my ſelf

ſelf to give you an Encomium of it. The *French* Academy have judged it to be a perfect Work; the moſt able * Criticks unanimouſly confirm it; and † thoſe who are not of the ſame Sentiment, which the Author maintaineth in Favour of *Homer* and *Virgil*, ſpeak of this Book as of a Work perfect in its kind. You ſee me already exempt from the Fear of commending it too much, I have no other then that I ſhall not commend it as it deſerveth. But I have a Mind to try, and at leaſt for the Expreſſions that occur to me, it will not be difficult for me to ſucceed. In ſhort, what Beauties may not one diſcover in this Work? Where doth one find more Order, Perſpicuity, or Learning? It is an exact Diſpoſition of the Parts that giveth one a regular Idea of the Whole; and that is moſt regular, of which one eaſily diſcovers all the ſeveral Parts. Art reigneth in it throughout, but that

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* *Monſieur and Mad.* Dacier Ariſt. *Poetry. Tranſlation of* Homer. *Mr.* Boileau Deſpreaux *Divine Works, Vol.* 2.

† *Mr.* Le Clerc Parraſiana, *Vol.* 1.

is true Art which leadeth us to the true Beauties of Nature, without letting us perceive the Artifice. A nice Diſcernment, a ſolid Judgment, and a great Knowledge of all Things, are equally diffuſed thro' the Work, together with that Conduct which makes it appear that the Author choſe his Subject to illuſtrate that, and not to ſhew his own Abilities. He doth Juſtice to the Ancients, without vilifying the Moderns; and of all the Books that have been made to defend *Homer* and *Virgil* againſt the Criticks of the Times, there is not one which doth more Honour to theſe great Poets, becauſe there is not one which maketh us more ſenſible of the true Merit of their Poems. This Reverend Father alſo compoſed this Treatiſe to make us better underſtand the Beauties of the *Æneid*. He makes uſe of *Homer*, *Ariſtotle*, and *Horace*, which he interpreteth the one by the other, and *Virgil* by all three, *as having every one of them the ſame Genius and the ſame Idea of Epick Poetry*. He teacheth us that Art hath formed the Nature of an *Epick Poem*, from a Moral explained by the help of a Fable. He maketh us ſenſible

ble that all of it ought to be great, raiſed; that the Action ought to be one, entire, perfect and compleat; that the Gods and the Princes in it are Perſons Natural to be introduced; that the Authors of ſuch a Work in Point of Inſtruction have the Preeminence over the Hiſtorians, and the Generality of the Philoſophers. For the End of this ſort of Poetry is to form the Manners; and it leadeth the more certainly to that End, in that it makes uſe of charming Fictions, by which Admiration, Curioſity, and Pleaſure are equally raiſed. Conducting us in this manner to what is profitable by what is agreeable, the true Definition of an *Epick Poem, is a Diſcourſe invented with Art to form the Manners, by Inſtructions diſguiſed under the Allegories of an important Action, delivered in Verſe in a probable, diverting, and ſurprizing manner.* So that *Epick Poetry* above all deſerveth the Character of Divine, which chiefly diſtinguiſheth Poetry from Proſe, according to the elegant Compariſon which Mr. *Peliſſon* maketh of them in his Diſcourſe upon the Works of M. *Saraſin.* "When "we conſider, ſaith he, a Houſe of

"Pleaſure.

" Pleaſure in the Hands of a rich and
" curious Maſter, and when we ſee
" the Hills levelled to pleaſe him, the
" Precipices filled up, the Rivers turned
" from their Courſe, the Streams hid a
" little under the Earth riſing up in the
" Air, or throwing themſelves down
" Caſcades; we truly admire the In-
" duſtry of Men, and cannot enough
" wonder that a Creature ſo weak
" ſhould be capable of ſuch great De-
" ſigns. But if it happeneth by Chance,
" that in a great Extent of Air, where
" no Object before employed our View,
" any one ſhould ſhew us in an Inſtant
" a proud and magnificent Palace, great
" and ſpacious Fields, Mountains,
" Foreſts, Rivers and Lakes, we
" ſhould immediately cry out, That this
" was not the effect of Human Power;
" and that there was in it ſomething
" above our Nature. It is almoſt the
" ſame thing between Poetry and Proſe.
" The one, as I have already ſaid,
" borroweth its Subject elſewhere,
" changing and adorning it, in Truth
" beyond what one can imagine; but
" the other deſireth nothing from any
" one, and contented with it ſelf, draw-

" eth

" eth its Matter out of its own Breaſt,
" making Something out of Nothing,
" as it were by a ſort of Creation,
" which ſeemeth to ſurpaſs all Human
" Power. "

Some Authors pretend that the End of Poetry is purely Pleaſure and Satisfaction, without any regard to Uſe and Inſtruction: Others have advanced, that Imagination only maketh us diſcover in *Homer* the moral Senſe which maketh his Fables eſteemed Allegorical. Without confuting theſe Sentiments ſo diſhonourable to Poetry and its Profeſſors, Sentiments ſo remote from the Judgment of Orators, Philoſophers, and Poets themſelves; will it not be reaſonable to ſay, Sir, that if this were true, it would be better to regard it as falſe, and to believe that the Fictions of Poetry, and above all of *Epick Poetry*, ought to contain ſome Inſtruction. This is the way, I think, to enhance the Value and the Pleaſure we take in reading them, becauſe in Lieu of one Advantage, this is to have two. Things agreeable in themſelves become ſo much the more agreeable when they unite Pleaſure with great Advantage. This

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is what the learned Perſon, to whom we owe this Treatiſe, hath admirably taught us to find in the reading of *Epick Poems*, of which *Homer* and *Virgil* have given us the true Models. The Things which theſe great Men have ſaid, and which appear the moſt abſurd to thoſe who read them without underſtanding the Genius of Poetry, are moſt admired by thoſe who know how to judge of them. One is raviſhed to find the Mind entertained with inſtructive Truths, when the Imagination is agreeably employed by wonderful Fictions. If one ſeeth many Gods introduced, that is by no means to deſtroy the Unity of the Divine Nature, it is only better to repreſent the infinite Greatneſs of all his Attributes. Jupiter *is the Power of God*, Deſtiny *is his abſolute Will to which even his Power is ſubject, becauſe God never doth any thing but what he willeth. Sometimes* Juno *is his Juſtice, which doth not ſpare even good People to leave nothing in them but Virtues, Merits, and Matter of Reward:* Sometimes conſidered in a Phyſical Senſe, ſhe repreſenteth the Air, that wonderful Space where the Vapours and Exhalations gather themſelves about

about and within the Hills, but do not make the Winds till they have taken in the Air the degree of neceſſary Heat, *ſo that it is to* Juno *that Æolus oweth his Divine Nouriſhment.*

Et tu das Epulis accumbere Divum.

Theſe are Explanations that relate to the Truths of Divinity and Phyſick; the Moral have likewiſe their Allegories. The Furies and the Devils repreſent thoſe Madneſſes with which Impiety tranſports us when we deliver our ſelves to the Government of our Paſſions, or thoſe Remorſes of Conſcience which torment us with a View of our Crimes; ſo that according as a Poet ſpeaketh of the Gods, whether as a Divine, or as a Natural Philoſopher, he giveth them Manners, Diſcourſes, and Actions conformable to the Nature of the Thing which he repreſenteth under a Divine Perſon. The Reverend Father alſo giveth us to underſtand that we ought to attend to the Character of the Perſons which the Poet introduceth; if he be a Pious Man or an Atheiſt, a Stoick or an Epicurean; for theſe Perſons

ſons having different Sentiments of the Divinity, Propriety requireth that they act differently, becauſe they ought to act and ſpeak according to their Principles. In ſhort, the learned Author maketh us evidently perceive, that there is nothing in the great Poets which doth not contain a wonderful and inſtructive Senſe. The help that he giveth to make theſe Diſcoveries, carrieth with it ſo great a Light, that it is not poſſible to read *Homer* or *Virgil* after reading this Treatiſe, without being inſtructed and charmed with the reading of their Works. This is chiefly the Subject of the fifth Book, wherein is treated the different ſorts of Divinities, their Manners, and their Cuſtoms. The firſt Book propoſeth the Deſign of the whole Work, and treateth of the Nature of Epick *Poetry*. As the Fable is the Soul of it, he ſeeketh the Nature of the *Poem* in the Nature of the Fable, and he diſtinguiſheth thoſe that are proper, from thoſe that are otherwiſe. Afterwards he inſtructeth us in the manner how to form a Fable; he explaineth thoſe of the *Iliad*, the *Odyſſes*, and the *Æneid*, and evidently proveth it

to

to be neceſſary that the Poet ſhould invent the Action of his *Epick Poem*; and that in naming his Heroe he ſhould chooſe a name known in Hiſtory, the Idea of whom ſhould not be contrary to that of his Fiction. Nevertheleſs, if Hiſtory offereth an Action which Art requireth, a Poet may make uſe of it, becauſe it is proper to employ the known Actions of an Heroe of which one taketh the Name, to form the Epiſodes of the principal Action. In the Concluſion of this Book the Author obſerveth very judiciouſly, that we ought not to believe that Nature only, and the Advantages of a happy Genius, can enable us to judge of the ancient Poets, if Art and Study do not make us underſtand the Taſte and Manners of their Hearers, and of the Ages wherein they lived —— And that before we can judge of what relateth to an Epick Poem, and of *Homer*, who is the Author and firſt Model of it, we muſt well underſtand his Allegories, and the Moral and Phyſical Truth of his Fables, wherewith his Poems are filled.

The Second Book ſpeaketh of the Matter of an *Epick Poem*, of the Unity

of

of Action, of its Entireneſs, of its Cauſes, of its Beginning, of the Middle, of the End, of the Duration, of the Importance, of the Diſcovery, and of the finiſhing the Action; this Finiſhing differeth from the Diſcovery: *It is the laſt Paſſage of Agitation and Trouble to Repoſe and Tranquillity.* The different Signification of the Word *Epiſodes* is there explained; and we find that the *Epiſodes are not Actions, but the Parts of an Action, which make up the Action and the Matter of the Poem, as the Members make up the Matter of the Body.* And he obſerveth, *that we ought not to confound the Action with the Fable, nor the Deſign of the Heroe in the Action which he performeth, with the Deſign of the Poet in the Allegory, and in the Moral which he teacheth.*

The Third Book explaineth the Form of the *Epick Poem*, the Title, the Propoſal, the Narration: The Invocation muſt not be omitted, becauſe the Poet ſaith Things, which he is not ſuppoſed to know, if ſome Divinity had not inſpired him. The Narration ought to be agreeable, probable, admirable, and moving; he hath alſo ſpoke of its Continuity and Duration.

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The Fourth Book treateth of Manners in General, of the Cauſes of Manners, of Manners that have no relation to Poetry, of Poetical Manners. What is proper to Poetry in the Doctrine of Manners, is to ſhew what are the Inclinations which a Poet giveth to his Perſons, whether they are good, bad, or indifferent, it matters not. Upon this Occaſion the Author ſheweth that there are Heroes in *Evil* as well as in *Good*, and that a Poet doth not err in introducing a wicked Heroe. He agreeth that a Poet ought never to give bad Examples; but he obſerveth, *that there is a great deal of Difference between a bad Example, and the Example of a bad Action, or a bad Perſon.* And indeed the Example of a bad Character doth not leſs contribute to form the Manners by the Averſion it inſpireth againſt Vice, than the Example of a good Character contributeth to form the Manners by the Love it inſpireth for Vertue: From whence we may conclude, that the Poets not only do well to put in their Poems vitious Heroes; but that there is even a Neceſſity to introduce them to make the virtuous

Heroes

Heroes ſhine the brighter, who ought to be the Objects of our Imitation. In this the Poets ought to imitate the Painters, who in the ſame Piece where they paint Virtue under an amiable Figure, paint alſo the Oppoſite Vice under the Figure of ſome hideous Monſter; ſo that generally ſpeaking the Deſcription of Vice ſerveth to make it particularly diſtinguiſhed from Virtue. This is what the Reverend Father hath admirably proved. He treateth then of the Goodneſs of Poetick Manners, and of the Characters of the Perſons; he deſcribeth perfectly the Characters of *Achilles*, *Ulyſſes*, and *Æneas*; he likewiſe deſcribeth the ſubaltern Heroes of the *Æneid*; and ſheweth in the moſt uſeful manner the Difference between a true and a falſe Valour, as well by the Compariſon of *Turnus* with *Æneas*, as by other inſtructive Reflections. He ſheweth that with regard to Epick Poetry, all the different Characters which are there diſtinguiſhed, ought nevertheleſs to refer to the Character of the principal Heroe, by that means to make up the Unity of Character, which he exemplifieth by Characters taken out

of the *Thebaid*. This Treatiſe of Epick Poetry is alſo as detrimental to the Reputation of *Statius*, as it is Advantagious to that of *Virgil*; it looketh as if *Statius* had only taken Pains to be ſet in Oppoſition to him, and by his Faults to raiſe the Beauties of the Prince of the Latin Poets. The Works of *Seneca* the *Tragedian* are alſo conſidered to the ſame Purpoſe.

The ſixth Book giveth excellent Rules concerning the Manner with which the Hearers are to be engaged. He ſpeaketh of Deſcriptions; he ſheweth their Beauties, their Place, and ſheweth the Excellencies of *Virgil* by Examples taken out of his Poem. He doth as much with regard to the Compariſons and the Sentences, of which he perfectly ſheweth the Nature and the Uſe. This Book treateth likewiſe of ſome other Thoughts, and endeth the Work by curious Remarks upon Expreſſion and Elocution. So that this is not only the laſt Part of this excellent Treatiſe, but is alſo an excellent Abridgement of *Rhetorick*.

I dare aſſure You, Sir, that whoever will read this *Treatiſe of Epick Poetry* with

with Attention, will eſteem it a Book not only abſolutely neceſſary to be read by thoſe who will read the Poets, and who will be Poets themſelves; but alſo as a Work which may ſerve as a Model to all Authors who will write with Judgment, and to all Readers who will read with Advantage. The Matters in it are ſo clearly propoſed, that one underſtandeth without trouble of what he treateth, and they are treated of in ſuch a manner, that one is inſtructed to the Bottom of every thing that relateth to them. The Author full of Light doth not hide Ignorance under a myſterious Obſcurity; he doth not at all affect to ſhew his Learning precipitately or unſeaſonably. It is like the Sun, which doth not diffuſe its Light but in proportion as he advanceth in his Courſe, and doth not go down till he hath given Light enough perfectly to diſtinguiſh the leaſt Objects.

If after this, Sir, You would know why I entertain You upon this Subject, this is the Reaſon. A Bookſeller having a mind to Reprint ſome good Book, and having caſt his Eyes upon this, asked me what I thought of it;

and I did not ſtick to aſſure him that he could not make a better Choice. This Bookſeller deſired of me that I would read the Book, and add ſome Notes to make the Edition more valuable which he ſhould publiſh. I conſented to what he deſired with Pleaſure, but perhaps unadviſedly, becauſe to put Notes to this Work which ſhould be equal to its Beauty, it would be neceſſary to know exactly what is ſaid of the Beauty of thoſe Authors, whoſe Thoughts have any relation to the Things treated of in this Book.

After I had examined this Book, I found my ſelf charmed to that degree, that my Eſteem and Admiration could not contain themſelves. I took a Pen to write, and as You are always an Object preſent to my Mind, I thought to addreſs to you all that I ſhould write upon this Subject, and I took a Reſolution to have this printed before this *Treatiſe of Epick Poetry*, as a Diſcourſe that ſhould ſerve inſtead of a Preface.

All thoſe, Sir, who ſhall ſee this, will underſtand that whoever eſteemeth what is Valuable, eſteemeth You, honoureth

noureth You, and loveth you with all his Heart; and to the Sentiments of Reſpect and Eſteem which you inſpire all thoſe with, who know what you are, I join the Sentiments of the moſt tender Love that it is poſſible for any one to have. It is a Pleaſure to publiſh it, but a greater to think, that my Love findeth in you a perfect Return, that you are my old Friend, faithful, approved, and whoſe Integrity aſſureth me of your Conſtancy. It is then the Excellency of this Book, and the Paſſion of Love that have occaſioned this Diſcourſe, and if I have not ſucceeded well with Regard to the one, I ſhall be excuſed in Favour of the other.

But before I make an end, I muſt ſay ſomething concerning the Notes which I have added to this Treatiſe. It is ſo perfect that it doth not want even an Addition upon the Margin. Why then do you put Notes? ſome Critick may readily ask: I anſwer, that if the Notes which are put upon the Margins of Books were only to illuſtrate ſome obſcure Places of the Text, this Book hath ſo little need of them, that one ought to craſe even thoſe which the Author

himſelf hath taken the Pain to make. But if Notes may be regarded as Hints which are of uſe to recal to the Mind the remarkable Paſſages of ſeveral Books, and to preſerve the Memory of Things which one reads, by Obſervations upon the Agreement or Repugnancy of Things which one knoweth, or reads, or ſhall read, it muſt be acknowledged that Notes cannot but be uſeful, becauſe one of the great Advantages of Reading, is to remember the Things one hath read.

With regard to this Book, following the Example which the Author himſelf giveth, I have put in Latin and Greek the Paſſages which this Work relateth in French, which are Originally in thoſe two Languages. We know that a Reader is always pleaſed to ſee the original Expreſſions, and to find them eaſily. The Edition upon which I have worked was uſeful in this firſt Point, in that it ſhewed in the Margin the Books of which this Treatiſe related any thing, but it ſhewed only the Book. So that if this proveth the Uſefulneſs of examining ſome Paſſages in the Original, it would only excite the Curioſity without ſatisfying it.

For

For the Notes of another kind you will judge, Sir, if they are proper; this is certain, if I am miſtaken, this excellent Treatiſe is not at all ſpoiled by them, it explaineth and illuſtrateth it ſelf, and I have done nothing in this Reſpect. It is like an exquiſite Diſh of Meat finely ſerved up, and adorned with Flowers the Flowers may adorn, and pleaſe, but they may be preſerved or taken away without rendring the Meat leſs delicate or leſs valuable.

As from the Admiration of a fine Work one naturally proceedeth to a Deſire of knowing particularly what relateth to the Author, and that one no where findeth any Thing to ſatisfy one concerning this Reverend Father, I took the Liberty to write to the Reverend Father *Courayer*, to deſire him to ſend me ſome Memoires concerning this learned Monk. Father *Courayer*, who at preſent filleth the Place which Father *Boſſu* before enjoyed, * after having wrote to the ſeveral Places where his famous Predeceſſor had been, and having

* *That of Library-keeper of the Royal Abby of St.* Genevieve, *where there are more than* 40000 *Volumes.*

made all the neceſſary Searches at *Paris*, did me the Honour to ſend me the following Memoire. Tho' the Life of this Reverend Father was divided between the Duties of Chriſtianity, and the Buſineſs of his Study, I am perſuaded, Sir, that every one will be pleaſed to find here an Account of him, and that this Account cometh from ſo good a Hand.

A ME-

A

MEMOIRE

Concerning the Reverend

Father *BOSSU*,

Sent to M.....

By the Reverend

Father *COURAYER*.

RENE' *LE BOSSU* was born at *Paris*, the 16th of *March* 1631. He was the Son of M. *John Boſſu*, Lord of *Courbevoye*, Counſellour to the King, and Advocate General in the Court of *Aides*, and of *Magdelane de la Lane*, Sifter of the famous *Noel*

de la Lane, Doctor of the *Sorbonne*, and Abbot of *Valcroiſſant*, who appeared with ſo much Reputation in the Affair of *Janſeniſm*. *Rene Le Boſſu* had from his Birth all the Qualities that are neceſſary to form great Men, a Mind large and penetrating, a ſolid Judgment, a happy Memory, a quick but regular Imagination, an Expreſſion eaſy and flowing, a ſweet and compoſed Temper, and, what ought to be more eſteemed, an honeſt Heart, and a Soul naturally Chriſtian. He found in his own Family Examples of Piety ſufficient to arm him againſt the Corruptions of the Age. His Siſter became a Nun in the famous Abby of *Val de Grace*; his Mother followed her in this Retreat, and both of them died in thoſe Diſpoſitions of Mind which make their Memory to this Day venerable in that Family.

A wiſe Education improved and increaſed thoſe hereditary Virtues which he brought into the World. Being committed to the Care of the moſt famous Maſters, he improved by the Examples of his Family, and by his own good Diſpoſitions to perfect a Nature which made it ſelf admired as ſoon as it

was

was diſcovered. He made his firſt Studies at *Nanterre*, with a Succeſs that exceeded all Hopes, and the Taſte which he ſhewed for good Learning, was anſwerable to the Hopes that were conceived of him. One always diſcovered in him a Genius proper for all Sciences, and a Modeſty always Superior to his Improvement.

Going from *Nanterre* he entred into *St. Genevieve*, where he took the Habit of the Canons Regular, the 24th of *July* in the Year 1649, in the 18th Year of his Age.

Tho' they had often admired his Piety and Religion which conſecrated his other Talents, yet they ſtill diſcovered more than was expected, for the Edification of others, and for the Sanctification of himſelf. They received him with Joy, and after his Year of Probation, he made his Profeſſion in the Abby the 7th of *Auguſt*, in the Year 1650.

He did not make it a long time before he rendred himſelf uſeful to the Society that received him: He was ſcarce got out of his Probation, but he had the Care of Children who were educated at St. *Vincent de ſenlis*; He began to inſpire them

them with thoſe Sentiments of Piety which he had himſelf, and with the Taſte of good Learning with which he was born. Applying himſelf afterwards to the Study of Philoſophy and Divinity, he made it appear that to whatſoever Study he determined himſelf it would always be with Succeſs and Improvement. Either out of Inclination or out of Duty he returned to the Exerciſe of the curious Part of Learning; and having received the Order of Prieſthood with the moſt holy and edifying Diſpoſitions the 7th of *March* 1657, he reaſſumed the Profeſſion of Humanity which the Courſe of his other Studies had interrupted. He went ſucceſſively into different Families to teach Rhetorick, and he every where appeared with a Pre-eminence that was known to every one but himſelf. It was deſired if poſſible to multiply him; but care was taken to employ him where there was moſt need of him, and where the Advantage was moſt general. Being filled with a certain Plainneſs which becometh great Men, he had a perfect Deference for the Orders and the Deſires of his Superiors, and he was always

ways to them a ſure Reſource in every thing that regarded his Miniſtry.

Nevertheleſs, after ten or twelve Years ſpent in a fatiguing Employment, this Reverend Father reſolved to think of a Retreat, and to eaſe himſelf of the Pains he had taken in a laborious and wearisome Buſineſs. But by retiring he did not pretend to languiſh in Idleneſs. Being careful of his Time, which he dedicated to the Search of Truth, he wrote upon different Subjects as his Reading or his Converſation with his Friends furniſhed him with Matter. He immediately publiſhed *his Parallel between the Philoſophy of* Deſcartes *and* Ariſtotle, which ſoon ſunk without the Publick ſeeming to intereſt it ſelf much in the Matter; either becauſe the Repugnancy between theſe two Philoſophers appeared too great to be reconciled, or becauſe he had not examined their Sentiments enough to underſtand them.

But he was made Amends for the ſmall Succeſs of this Work by that which his *Epick Poem* met with, which appeared the ſame Year a few Months after. The Publick received it with that Applauſe, that

that forty Years have only increaſed it; and in Spight of the Cenſure of ſome Criticks, to whom our Author appeared to have made the firſt falſe Step, it ſupporteth it ſelf, by its own Merit, and by the Opinion of the moſt excellent Maſters of the Art.

This Work ought to have been followed by two others, which confirming by new Proofs what appeared to have been weakly eſtabliſhed, would have put this Treatiſe beyond all Exception. But the Memoires full of Learning which he left, only make us regret that which he only with Succeſs could have finiſhed. Theſe Memoires contain Remarks upon *Virgil*, and a Diſſertation upon what is advanced in the 12th Chap. of the 2d Book of this Treatiſe.

His Learning did not exhauſt it ſelf in theſe Works; we find of his in the Abby of St. *John de Chartres*,

Six Volumes in *Folio*,
Three in *Quarto*,
One in *Octavo*.

Beſides two long Letters upon Paper in *Folio*, which are not bound, and which are entituled, *Remarks upon a Diſſertation concerning the Kinds of the Euchariſt.*

The

The firſt of theſe Letters conſiſts of 37 great Pages. The ſecond of 9. and may make a Volume of a reaſonable Size.

In the firſt Volume in *Folio* we find a Treatiſe of 84 Pages upon the *Diſſertation of* Mr. *Petit concerning the Nature of Cold.*

A Defence of *Ariſtotle* againſt the *Academical Diſſertations of* Mr. *Petit upon the Nature of Cold and Heat*, in 50 Pages.

A Letter of 72 Pages upon *the Nature and Eſſence of Quantity*, which containethan Infinity of curious Things.

Another Letter of 24 Pages upon the *ſame Subject*, and upon *ſeveral Phyſical Points*, followed by another Letter of 24 Pages upon the *ſame Subject*; and a third only of 12 Pages.

A Letter of 12 Pages upon the *Nature of Philoſophy.*

One of 10 Pages concerning *Infinity.*

Another Letter of 36 Pages *upon Light and Refraction*, &c. This firſt Volume endeth by a Treatiſe of 36 Pages upon *the Extenſion of firſt Matter.*

The ſecond Volume containeth *Reflections upon a Treatiſe of the Soul of Beaſts*,

Beaſts, by A. D. contained in 231 Pages. Theſe Reflections are followed by a long Extract out of the Works of St. *Auguſtin*, concerning his Opinion *upon the Subſtance and Properties of the Souls of Beaſts:* This Extract, which is very learned, conſiſts of 86 Pages.

In the third Volume we find, *De Diluvio Sylva*: This Piece of Poetry is accompanied with ſeveral curious Remarks upon Paſſages of the *holy Scriptures* which have relation to the Deluge. This Piece hath 20 Pages; and is followed by a Letter of 22 Pages, in which the Reverend Father anſwereth ſeveral Difficulties raiſed upon the Subject of the Deluge.

Afterwards we find a long Treatiſe upon the *three States of the World.* The firſt before the Deluge: The ſecond after the Deluge to the Day of the Great Judgment; and the third after the laſt Day of this preſent World.

In this Treatiſe he giveth us many learned Explanations of ſeveral Paſſages of the *holy Scriptures.*

In the ſame Volume there is a Treatiſe of an Hundred Pages, which containeth *New Difficulties upon the new*

Obſervations and Conjectures of Mr. De la Chambre *upon the Rainbow:* This is one of his beſt Pieces.

This is followed by another Treatiſe, which is not leſs excellent nor leſs uſeful, which is entitled, *The Project of a Treatiſe of Natural Philoſophy, divided into ſix Parts.* 1ſt *of Phyſick.* 2d *of Metaphyſick.* 3d. *of Material Beings.* 4th. *of the Soul.* 5th. *of God.* 6th. *The Conſideration of all Beings in their natural Order.* This Volume endeth with a Treatiſe upon the *Phyſick of Ariſtotle* in 60 Pages.

The fourth Volume, as well as the fifth and the ſixth, is entituled, *Phyſical Memoires.* It containeth Memoires upon the *Difference of the Body and the Soul.* There are two Treatiſes of it; the firſt hath 40 Pages; the ſecond is full of many fine Obſervations, and hath 190 Pages. Theſe two Treatiſes are followed by a third of 65 Pages, which hath for the Title, *Remarks upon a Letter wrote to a learned Monk, to ſhew* 1ſt *that the Syſtem of M.* Deſcartes *and his Opinion concerning Brutes, have nothing in them dangerous.* 2d, *That all that he hath wrote upon it ſeemeth to be taken out of the firſt Chapter of* Geneſis.

The

The fifth Volume containeth, 1ſt. *A Letter from a Doctor to one of his Friends*; in which are propoſed 23 Phyſical Queſtions concerning the Doctrine of M. *Deſcartes*, which the Doctor and his Friend oppoſe. 2d. *The Anſwer of a* Carteſian *to* 23 *Articles.*

This *Carteſian* is the Reverend Father *Maure Fouquet*, a Benedictine. Theſe 23 Queſtions are the moſt curious of all Natural Philoſophy; and they are treated of in 43 Pages. After we ſee the *Letter from a Divine to one of his Friends*, containing ſome Reflections upon the Anſwer of a *Carteſian* to the Difficulties propoſed in the foregoing Letter: This long and learned Letter hath 69 Pages. This Volume endeth with a long Anſwer to the Reflections of the Divine upon the 23 Queſtions; it hath 167 Pages.

The ſixth Volume containeth five Letters upon *Phyſical Matters.* Afterwards we ſee *an Extract of the Theſes of the Philoſophy of* M. Gutſchoven, *Canon and Profeſſor of* Liege; which is followed by nine Letters of Father *Boſſu*; the laſt of which is *upon the Exiſtence of God, and upon the Knowledge we have of him*; it hath

hath 204 Pages, and is full of great Learning.

Theſe are the Contents of the ſix ſmall *Folio's*.

Afterwards there are three *Quarto's*; the firſt of which containeth a *Letter to* M. Stephen concerning the Manner in which one might propoſe the Phyſick of M. *Deſcartes*, wrote upon the Subject of the Sentiments of that Author upon the *Euchariſt*, at *Chartres* the laſt Day of *January* 1669. This Letter, which maketh the whole Volume, hath 442 Pages.

In the ſecond Volume we find an *Eſſay* upon Phyſick, which fully comprehendeth the Principles of that Science. This Tome hath 370 Pages.

The third Volume in *Quarto* containeth a long *Catholick Diſſertation upon the Senſe of the Words of* Tertullian *concerning the* Euchariſt. It is divided into 22 Chapters, which make 140 Pages. This long Diſſertation is followed by a Letter upon the *Nutrition* and the Corruption of the Euchariſtical Elements, *&c.* And by another Letter of 23 Pages, and by an Anſwer which Father *Boſſu* made upon *four Difficulties*

ties which were propoſed to him concerning the Euchariſt. After this Letter there is a long one of 126 Pages, which he wrote to Father *Coffin*, in the Form of *Memoires*, to explain Light, according to the Sentiment of *Ariſtotle* and *Deſcartes*. This Tome endeth with two Treatiſes, one of which relateth to *Sound*, and the other containeth delicate Remarks upon the *Obſervation of Mock Suns*. This Treatiſe is filled with Figures, and ſeemeth to be finiſhed. Theſe two laſt Treatiſes contain 100 Pages.

The laſt of the Works of this Reverend Father is an *Octavo* of 260 Pages, which are *Reflections upon the Converſations of* Mr. *Rohaut*, beſides two *Memoires* which I have already mentioned, and the Manuſcripts of which there are wanting the firſt and the laſt Pages. The one containeth Remarks upon *Virgil*, the other a Diſſertation addreſſed to M. *Chapelain* to ſupport what is advanced in the 12th Chapter of the 1ſt Book of this Treatiſe, *that we ought to give but one Campagne to the Epick Action of* Æneas, *and not a Year or more, as all the Interpreters of* Virgil pretend. All theſe Treatiſes are preſerved at St.

John

John de Chartres, where Father *Boſſu* retired about the Year 1677, and where he died Superior. He came to *Chartres* from St. *Genevieve*, where he had been three Years Library-Keeper with the famous Father *Du Moulinet*. It was without doubt during this time that he turned to his Advantage the Liberty he had to give himſelf to Reading, and acquired that Knowledge of Books, and that great Fund of Learning which is extended thro' thoſe Works we have now mentioned: Works certainly that require the greateſt Depth of Meditation and Enquiry; tho' we muſt aver that Father *Boſſu* ſtudied and compoſed with that Eaſe of which there are few Examples. His Mind furniſhed his Pen with ſuch Abundance of Matter, that his Friends in the reviſing his Works had nothing to do but to abridge them. As his Reading or his Converſation raiſed any Difficulty to be cleared, or any Opinion to be oppoſed, he put his Pen to Paper, and never left off writing till he came to the End of his Deſign. So that falling one Day upon the firſt Part of a Work which St. *Sorlin* compoſed againſt *Boileau Deſpreaux*, Father

Boſſu

Boſſu made a ſecond Part, which being printed with the firſt, ſerved to confute it. M. *Boileau* was very ſenſible of it; and this Incident tied them in ſo ſtrong a Friendſhip, which being improved by reciprocal Merits, did not expire but with the Life of this Father. His Works were never compoſed by way of Syſtem. Even his Epick Poem in which he appeareth moſt, is as it were made up of different Parcels, to which for the good of the Publick he gave ſome Form. The learned Father *L' Allemant* helped him in this Deſign, whom he reſpected as his Maſter.

Whatever Love Father *Boſſu* had for Study, it did not make him the more difficult of Acceſs: The obliging manner with which he received every one, took away all Suſpicion of their being troubleſome. He was always equal, without Paſſion, without Humour, without Contradiction; he was the Comfort of his Brothers, and the Center of their Confidence and their Union, being free from that troubleſome ſort of Learning which ſeeketh all Occaſions to ſhew it ſelf. One never perceived his Learning but in the Reading of his Works;

and

and in all his Converſation he ſhewed himſelf willing to learn, which was a Quality more valuable than his Learning.

Perhaps one never ſaw any one more diſengaged than Him. He was indifferent as to his Perſon and his Works; he ſubmitted himſelf without reſerve to the Judgment of his Friends, and the Orders of his Superiors, being equally diſpoſed to improve by the Learning of the one, and to conform himſelf to the Will of the other. Being engaged in one Work, he quitted it for another of a different kind, without ſeeming to offer any Violence to his Inclinations. He was attached to nothing, and ſeemed to do every thing with Pleaſure; he knew how to apply himſelf to the meaneſt Capacity, and to communicate himſelf to all with the ſame Eaſe. His Way of ſpeaking, his Voice, his Manner, all ſhewed the Tranquillity of his Mind, and Sweetneſs of Nature ſo prevailed in him, that he became the Delight of all whom he inſtructed and edified.

Faith and Religion ſanctified all his amiable Qualities. Being born for the Society to which he belonged, he would never exert himſelf, and was ſo far from

ſeek-

ſeeking Employments, that his greateſt Care was to avoid them. The Contemplation of eternal Truths, the Reading of holy Books, made his Retreat the more ſweet. Study never deſtroyed in him the Sentiments of Piety which he inherited from his Family, and which Religion had improved: On the contrary he made uſe of it to render them more perfect, and one always admired in him a Man of Wit without Libertiniſm, Religious without Superſtition, who knew how to inſtruct himſelf in the Goſpel, and to conform himſelf to it as far as human Weakneſs and the Corruption of the Age would permit. It was in theſe holy Diſpoſitions that Death ſurprized him the 14th of *March*, 1680, being overwhelmed not with Years, but with Pains, which cauſed the Illneſs of which he died, full of good Works, but more full of Confidence in the infinite Mercy of his Creator. He was no more then 49 Years of Age; and it was an Aggravation of Sorrow to his Brothers to loſe him at a Time, when his Experience and his Virtue could have rendred him more uſeful to them, and to the Publick.

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Monsieur

Monſieur *Boſſu*'s Treatiſe OF THE EPICK POEM.

BOOK I.

Of the Nature of the Epick Poem; *and of the* Fable.

CHAP. I.

The Deſign of the whole Work.

RTS, as well as *Sciences*, are founded upon *Reaſon*, and in both we are to be guided by the *Light of Nature*. But in *Sciences*, neither the *Inventers*, nor the *Improvers* of them, are to make uſe of any other Guides but this

Light of Nature: Whereas on the other hand, all *Arts* depend upon a great many other Things, ſuch as the *Choice* and *Genius* of thoſe who firſt invented them, or of thoſe who have labour'd at them with an Univerſal Applauſe.

Poetry is of this Nature: And tho' *Reaſon* might have firſt founded it, yet it cannot be deny'd but that the *Invention* of *Poets*, and the *Choice* they have been pleas'd to make, have added thereto both its *Matter* and *Form*. 'Tis then in the excellent Pieces of Antiquity we are to look for the Fundamentals of this Art: And, they are only to be rely'd on, to whom all others yield the Glory of having either practis'd with the moſt Succeſs, or collected and preſcrib'd Rules with the greateſt Judgment.

The *Greeks* and *Latins* have furniſh'd us with Examples of both kinds. *Ariſtotle* and *Horace* left behind them ſuch Rules as make them, by all Men of Learning, to be look'd upon as perfect Maſters of the Art of *Poetry*: And the Poems of *Homer* and *Virgil* are, by the Grant of all Ages, the moſt perfect Models of this way of Writing the World ever ſaw. So that if ever a Juſt and Supreme Authority had the Power to preſcribe Laws and Rules to any Art, one cannot queſtion but theſe four Perſons had all Authority on their ſide, with reſpect to the *Epick Poem*. And this is the only kind we ſhall treat of at preſent.

'Tis

'Tis true, the Men of our Times may have as much *Spirit* as the Ancients had; and, in thoſe Things which depend upon *Choice* and *Invention*, they may likewiſe have as juſt and as lucky *Fancies*: But then it would be a Piece of Injuſtice to pretend that our new Rules deſtroy thoſe of our firſt Maſters; and that they muſt needs condemn all their Works, who could not foreſee our Humours, nor adapt themſelves to the *Genius* of ſuch Perſons as were to be born in After-ages, under different Governments, and under a different Religion from theirs; and with Manners, Cuſtoms, and Languages, that have no kind of Relation to them.

Having no Deſign then by this Treatiſe to make *Poets* after the Model of our Age (with which I am not ſufficiently acquainted) but only to furniſh my ſelf with ſome ſort of Foundation in the Deſign I have of explaining the *Æneid* of *Virgil*; I need not concern my ſelf with every new Invention of theſe laſt Times. I am not of Opinion, that what our late Authors think is univerſal Reaſon, and ſuch a common Notion as Nature muſt needs have put into the Head of *Virgil*. But leaving Poſterity to determine whether theſe Novelties be well or ill devis'd, I ſhall only acquieſce in what I think may be prov'd from *Homer*, *Ariſtotle*, and *Horace*. I will interpret the one by the Other, and *Virgil* by all Three, as having the ſame *Genius* and *Idea* of *Epick Poeſie*.

CHAP. II.

What is the Nature of the Epick Poem.

THE moſt conſiderable Difference my Subject preſents me with, between the Style of the Ancients and that of the laſt Ages, is, That our way of Speaking is plain, proper, and without the *Turn*: Whereas theirs was full of Myſteries and Allegories. The Truth was mask'd under thoſe ingenious Inventions, which for their Excellence go under the name of *Fables*, or *Sayings*; as if there were as much difference between theſe fabulous Diſcourſes of the Wiſe, and the ordinary Language of the Vulgar, as there is between the Language that is proper to Men, and the Sounds brute Beaſts make uſe of to expreſs their Paſſions and Senſations.

At firſt the *Fables* were employ'd in ſpeaking of the *Divine Nature* according to the Notion they then had of it. This ſublime Subject made the firſt *Poets* to be ſtil'd *Divines*, and *Poetry the Language of the Gods*. They divided the Divine Attributes as it were into ſo many Perſons; becauſe the Infirmity of a Humane Mind cannot ſufficiently conceive, or explain ſo much Power and Action in a Simplicity ſo great and indiviſible as is that of God.

God. And perhaps they were jealous of the Advantages they reap'd from ſuch excellent and refin'd Learning, and which they thought the vulgar Part of Mankind was not worthy of.

They could not tell us of the Operations of this Almighty Cauſe, without ſpeaking at the ſame time of its Effects: So that to *Divinity* they added *Phyſiology*, and treated thereof, without quitting the Umbrages of their Allegorical Expreſſions.

But *Man* being the chief and the moſt noble of all the Effects which God produc'd, and nothing being ſo proper, nor more uſeful to *Poets* than this Subject, they have added it to the former, and treated of the Doctrine of *Morality* after the ſame manner as they did that of *Divinity* and *Philoſophy*: And from Morality thus diſcours'd of, has Art form'd that kind of *Poem* and *Fable*, which we call the *Epick*.

What the *Divines* made their *Divinity*, that did the *Epick Poets* make their *Morality*. But that infinite Variety of the Actions and Operations of the Divine Nature (to which our Underſtanding bears but little Proportion) did as it were force them upon dividing the ſingle *Idea* of the only one God into ſeveral Perſons, under the different Names of *Jupiter*, *Juno*, *Neptune*, and the reſt. And on the other hand, the Nature of *Moral Philoſophy* being ſuch as never lays down a Rule for any particular Thing, the *Epick Poets* were oblig'd to unite in one ſingle *Idea*, in one and the ſame

Person, and in an Action that appear'd singular, all that look'd like it in different Persons, and in various Actions, which might be thus contain'd as so many *Species* under their *Genus*.

Therefore when * *Aristotle* speaks to this Purpose, *That Poetry is more serious than History, and that Poets are greater Philosophers than Historians are:* He does not only speak this to magnifie the Excellence of this Art, but to inform us also of the Nature of it. † *Poesie*, says he, *teaches Morality not by Recital only as an Historian, who barely tells us what* Alcibiades *for Instance* ('tis *Aristotle*'s own Instance) *did or suffer'd: But by proposing whatever a Person, let the Poet call him by what Name he pleases, ought either necessarily, or in all probability, to have said or done upon that or the like occasion?* 'Tis in this Nature that the *Poet* lays down the bad Consequences of an ill-grounded Design or a wicked Action; or else the Reward of good Actions, and the Satisfaction one receives from a Design form'd by Vertue, and manag'd by Prudence. Thus in the ‡ *Epopéa*, according to *Aristotle*,

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* Φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον Ποίησις Ἱστορίας ἐστίν. Poet. c. 9.

† Οἷ τοιάζει ἡ Ποίησις ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθεμένη Ibid.

‡ Ἡ μὲν Ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἡ δ' Ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον, λέγει. Ibid.

let the Names be what they will, yet the *Persons* and the *Actions* are *Feign'd*, *Allegorical*, *and Universal*; not *Historical*, and *Singular*.

Horace is likewise of the same Mind, as we shall see hereafter. Only by the way we cannot but observe, that he not only says * that *Poets* teach Men *Morality* full as well as *Philosophers*, but in that he even gives *Homer* the Pre-eminence.

The reason *Poets* are more excellent herein than the plain downright *Philosopher*, is this, † that every sort of *Poem* is in general an *Imitation*. Now Imitation is extremely natural, and pleases every Body: By which means this way of proposing Things is more charming, and more proper to take with an *Audience*. Besides Imitation is an Instruction by Examples; and Examples are very proper to perswade, since they prove such or such a Thing is feasible. In short, ‡ Imitation is so far the Essence of *Poetry*, that it is Poetry it self, as *Aristotle* the first Founder of this Art tells us:

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* Quicquid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non, Plenius & melius Chrysipppo & Crantore dicit. *Epist. Lib.* 1. *Ep.* 2

† Ποιήσεις πᾶσαι τυγχάνουσιν οὖσαι μιμήσεις τὸ σύναλον. Arist. Poet. c. 1.

‡ Κατὰ φύσιν δὲ ὄντος ἡμῖν τῷ μιμεῖσθαι. ἐξ ἀρχῆς οἱ πεφυκότες πρὸς αὐτὰ μάλιστα, καὶ μικρὸν προάγοντες ἐγένησαν τὴν ποίησιν, ὐκ τῶν αὐτοσχεδιασμάτων. Poet. c. 4.

And * *Horace* recommends it very particularly to the *Poet* he would create.

But tho' *Poets* play the *Moral Philoſophers*, yet ſtill they are no leſs *Divines*. The *Morality* they deal withal, does indiſpenſibly oblige them to have a Vein of Divinity run thro' all their Works: Becauſe the Knowledge, the Fear, and the Love of God; in a Word, Piety and Religion, are the chief and ſolideſt Foundations of other Vertues, and of all *Morality*.

The *Preſence of the Deity*, and the Care ſuch an Auguſt Cauſe ought to take about any Action, obliges the *Poet* to repreſent this *Action* as great, important, and manag'd by † *Kings and Princes*. It obliges him likewiſe to think and ſpeak in an elevated way above the Vulgar, and in a Style that may in ſome ſort keep up the Character of the Divine Perſons he introduces. ‡ To this end ſerves the Poetical and Figurative Expreſſion, and the Majeſty of the *Heroick Verſe*.

But all this, being divine and ſurprizing, may quite ruine all *Probability*: Therefore the *Poet* ſhould take ſpecial care as to that Point,

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* Reſpicere exemplar vitæ morumq; jubebo Doctum Imitatorem, & veras hinc ducere Voces. *Hor. Art. Poet.*

† Res geſtæ regumque Ducumque. *Hor. Art. Poet.*

‡ Cui mens divinior atque os Magna ſonaturum des Nominis hujus honorem. *Horat.*

ſince his chief Aim is to inſtruct, and without *Probability* any Action is leſs likely to perſwade.

To all this the *Poets* are oblig'd, by the Subſtance of the Things they propoſe to themſelves as the ſubject Matter of their Poems and Inſtructions. The manner of teaching them uſefully and methodically, has likewiſe oblig'd them to add ſeveral other Rules.

The *Epopéa*'s buſineſs is with the *Morals* and *Habitudes* more than the *Paſſions*. Theſe riſe on a ſudden, and their Heat is ſoon over; but the *Habitudes* are more calm, and come on, and go off more leiſurely. Therefore the *Epick Action* cannot be contain'd in one ſingle Day, as the *Dramatick* can: It muſt have a longer and more juſt ſpace allow'd it, than that of *Tragedy*, which is only allow'd for the *Paſſions*.

This Diſtinction makes the *Tragedy* and the *Epopéa* differ very much. The Violence of *Tragedy* requires a great deal more lively and brisk Repreſentation than that of a *Recital*: Beſides it is all Action, and the *Poet* ſays never a Word, as he does in the *Epopéa*, where there are no Actors.

But if in this the *Epopéa* is inferiour to the *Drama*, yet 'tis ſuperiour to both *Philoſophy* and *Hiſtory*: Becauſe 'tis a great deal more active than bare Philoſophy, and the Recitals of *Hiſtory*: And tho' it does not preſent Actors to the Eyes of the Spectators, yet it ought, at leaſt more frequently than *Hiſtorians*,

to break off the Thread of its Diſcourſe by the Speeches of its Perſonages. This *Ariſtotle* orders, when he ſays, that *the Narration of the Epick ought to be Dramatick*, that is to ſay, *very active*.

It has likewiſe its *Paſſions*, which give it no ſmall Advantage over *Philoſophy* and *Hiſtory*: But in this it is inferiour to *Tragedy*. For tho' it has a mixture of all the *Paſſions*, yet *Joy* and *Admiration* are the moſt eſſential to it. Theſe indeed contribute moſt towards the making us wiſe Men: *Admiration* and *Curioſity* are the Cauſe of *Sciences*; and nothing engages us ſo forcibly as *Pleaſure*. So that theſe two Paſſions muſt never be wanting to any invented Piece, if we would be inform'd in what we are indiſpenſably oblig'd to know.

To conclude, becauſe the Precepts had need be * conciſe, that ſo they may be more eaſily conceiv'd, and leſs burden the Memory; and becauſe nothing can be more effectual thereto, than propoſing one ſingle *Idea*, and collecting all Things ſo well together, that ſo they may be preſent to our Minds all at once, the *Poets* have reduc'd all to one † ſingle Action, under

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* Quicquid præcipies eſto brevis, ut citò dicta Percipiant animi dociles, teneantq; fideles. *Hor. Poet.*

† Denique ſit quodvis ſimplex duntaxat, & unum. *Ibid.*

one

one and the ſame Deſign, and in a Body whoſe Members and Parts ſhould be homogeneous.

CHAP. III.

The Definition of the Epick Poem.

THAT which we have obſerv'd concerning the Nature of the *Epick Poem*, gives us a juſt Idea of it, which we may expreſs thus:

"The *EPOPEA* is a Diſcourſe invented "by Art, to form the Manners by ſuch Inſtru-"ctions as are diſguis'd under the Allegories of "ſome one important Action, which is related "in Verſe, after a probable, diverting, and "ſurpriſing Manner."

This here is the Definition of the *Epopéa*, and not of *Poetry* it ſelf. For that is an Art of making all ſorts of Poems, of which the *Epick* is but a part. The *Epopéa* then is not an Art, but an artificial Thing, as 'tis expreſs'd in the Definition, which ſays 'tis *a Diſcourſe invented by Art*.

It is likewiſe one ſort of *Poem*, as 'tis intimated in the Definition by its being call'd *a Diſcourſe in Verſe*: And the reſt diſtinguiſhes it from all other ſorts of *Poems*.

The

The Action of *Comedy* is not very important; and beſides the * *Poet* ſays nothing, but only the Perſons he introduces, ſay and act All, juſt as in *Tragedy*. For this reaſon both This and That is ſtil'd a *Dramatick* Poem. And thus it is plain the *Epopèa* is neither *Tragedy* nor *Comedy*.

Nor is it a piece of *Natural Philoſophy*, as the Poems of *Empedocles* and *Lucretius*: Nor a Treatiſe of Husbandry, and the like, as the *Georgicks* of *Virgil*: Becauſe theſe Pieces are not deſign'd to form Men's Manners, and the Inſtructions contain'd in them are naked, ſimple, and proper, without Diſguiſe and Allegories.

This ſecond Reaſon, which more eſpecially concerns the Eſſence and Nature of Poeſy, does likewiſe exclude from the number of *Epick Poems*, any Piece of *Morality* writ in Verſe, and a plain *Hiſtory*, ſuch as *Lucan*'s *Pharſalia*, *the Punick War of Silius Italicus*, and ſuch like real Actions of ſome ſingular Perſons without a *Fable*, and in ſhort every thing that is deſcrib'd in Verſe after this manner.

I ſhall not trouble my Head to take notice how the *Epopèa* differs from the *Satyr*, the *Eclogue*, the *Ode*, the *Elegy*, the *Epigram*, and other leſſer Poems: For this is ſelf-evident.

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* Ἔτι δὲ τρεῖς αἱ μιμήσεις, καὶ δρῶντες ἄμφω· διὸ καὶ δράματα καλεῖσθαί τινες αὐτὴν φασιν, ὅτι μιμοῦνται δρῶντας. Ariſt. Poet. c. 3.

But

But it will not be amiſs to reflect upon what has been already ſaid, and from thence to conclude that the *Epopéa* has ſome Relation to Four Things; *viz.* to the *Poem*, to the *Fable*, to *Moral Philoſophy*, and to *Hiſtory*.

It has a Relation to *Hiſtory*, becauſe as well This as That relates one or more Actions: But the Actions of *Hiſtory* are ſingular and true, ſo that the *Epopéa* is neither a *Hiſtory*, nor a Species of *Hiſtory*.

It has a neceſſary Relation to *Morality*, ſince both one and the other inſtructs Men in their Morals; but the Action and the Allegories which are proper to it, is the cauſe why properly ſpeaking it is not *Moral Philoſophy*, although it may be ſtil'd a *Species* of it; and in ſhort, it has a great deal more relation to this than to *Hiſtory*.

But it belongs altogether to the *Poem* and the *Fable*, ſince it is properly and truly a *Poem* and a *Fable*; and is only diſtinguiſh'd from other Poems and Fables, as ſeveral *Species*, which equally partake of the ſame *Genus*, are diſtinguiſh'd from one another. Beſides, the Definition does exactly include both, ſince *a Poem is a Diſcourſe in Verſe*, and *a Fable is a Diſcourſe invented to form Men's Morals by Inſtructions diſguis'd under the Allegories of an Action*. So that one might abridge the Definition we have given of the *Epick Poem*, and only ſay, *that it is a Fable gracefully form'd upon an important Action, which is related in Verſe after a very probable and ſurpriſing manner*.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Parts of the Epick Poem. *The Diviſion of this Treatiſe.*

THE Parts of the *Epick Poem* contain'd in the former Definition are its *Nature*, its *Matter*, its *Form*, and its *Manner of propoſing Things.*

Its *Nature* is twofold; for the *Epopéa* is both a *Fable* and a *Poem.* But theſe two ſeveral *Genus*'s agree very well together, and compoſe a Body, that is no Monſter. One may likewiſe very well ſeparate theſe two Natures from one another, and ſay, that the *Fable* is that which conſtitutes the Nature of the *Epopéa*; and that the *Poem* tells us how to manage the *Fable*, and comprehends the *Thoughts*, the *Expreſſion*, and the *Verſe.*

The *Matter* of it is an *Action* feign'd with probability, and drawn from the Actions of Kings, Princes, and Gods. This tells us two Things, the *Action* and the *Perſons*, and therein it does not at all differ from *Tragedy.*

The *Form* of it is, that the Perſons are not here introduc'd to the Spectator's view, acting by themſelves without the Poet, as in *Tragedy*: But that the Action is recited by the Poet.

The *End* of the *Epick Poem* is to lay down *Moral Inſtructions* for all ſorts of People both in *general* and in *particular.* This part belongs

longs to the Poem as it is a *Fable*. It contains the *Moral* which ſerves for the Foundation of the *Fable*; and beſides that it contains the *Manners* of thoſe Perſonages who make ſome conſiderable Figure in the Poem.

Laſtly, as the *Form* includes the Perſon of the Poet who makes the Rehearſal: So does the *End* comprehend the Perſons of the Audience for whom the Poet deſigns his Inſtructions.

All theſe Things will make up the Subject-Matter of this Treatiſe: But 'tis not neceſſary they ſhould be all handled with the ſame Particularity and Exactneſs.

Some will very naturally fall under others, as that will, for inſtance, which we have to ſay concerning the Poet and his Audience.

To treat of the *End* and the *Moral* a-part would require too vaſt a Compaſs; I ſhall content my ſelf to ſpeak thereof in ſpeaking of the *Fable*, and in other Places, where the neceſſary Connexion of that Part with the reſt will afford me juſt Occaſions of ſpeaking as much of it as is requiſite for my Purpoſe.

Ariſtotle divided the *Thoughts* and *Expreſſions* into two Parts, as was very requiſite: But ſo many Authors have handled theſe Things, and ſo copiouſly too, that I think my ſelf excuſed from repeating and copying thoſe Things, which are under the Juriſdiction of other Arts. I will leave theſe Things then to the *Rhetoricians*, *Grammarians*, and to thoſe who have writ ſo much about them even in *Poetry* it ſelf.

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So that the little I have to ſay will be compris'd in one Part. And my Unwillingneſs to be copious, is the Reaſon which obliges me to ſpeak ſtill leſs of the *Poem* and *Verſification*.

But I ſhall write very fully of the *Fable*, as being the moſt eſſential Part of the *Epopéa*. So likewiſe I ſhall concerning its *Form*, and its *Matter*. Nay more, I ſhall handle diſtinctly the *Manners* of the Perſons. And laſtly, I ſhall diſtinguiſh the *Gods* from the *Men*. The *Gods* are uſually expreſs'd by the Name of *Machines*, becauſe the Poets make uſe of ſuch to let them down upon the Theatre; from whence the *Epopéa* has likewiſe borrowed the Name.

According to this Account, this Treatiſe will be divided into ſix Parts or Books.

The *Firſt* will be concerning the *Nature of the Epick Poem*, where we ſhall treat of the *Fable*.

The *Second* Book will treat of the *Matter*, or of the *Epick Action*.

The *Third* of the *Form*, or the *Narration*.

The *Fourth* of the *Manners* and Characters of *Humane Perſonages*.

The *Fifth* of *Machines*, or of the Preſence and Action of the *Gods*.

And the *Sixth* of the *Thoughts* and *Expreſſions*.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Of the Poem.

A Poem is a Diſcourſe in Verſe; and a Verſe is a part of a Diſcourſe meaſur'd by a certain number of long and ſhort Syllables, with a grateful Cadence, that is conſtantly repeated. This Repetition is neceſſary to diſtinguiſh the Notion we have of Verſe, from that of Proſe. For in Proſe as well as Verſe, every Period and Clauſe are ſo many parts of a Diſcourſe meaſured by a certain number of long and ſhort Syllables; but Proſe is ever and anon altering its Cadences and Meaſures, which Verſe never does.

The Repetition, which the Poets make uſe of, ſeems ſtill the ſame in the way of Writing: For, when one Verſe is finiſh'd, they come back again to the beginning of another Line to write the next Verſe. And this coming back again, is that which gives it the Name of * *Verſe*; and this Name in *Latin* is common to Verſes, and ſeveral other Things that are rang'd, as they are, in different Lines; as Trees, for inſtance, which are ſet in Rows.

* Verſus.

The *Latins* call Verſes likewiſe by the Name of *Carmina*; but this is an Equivocal Term: For beſides its ſignifying Verſes, or Poems, it may be uſed to expreſs other Things. 'Tis a Term

Term that is given to the * Singing of Birds, to the † Charms of Magick, to certain ‡ Forms of Law, to || Inſcriptions or Devices, to ** Epitaphs, and other ſuch like Things.

For the making of Verſes, 'tis not enough to take care of the Meaſure and Quantity of the Syllables, and to place ſix Feet juſt after one another in the ſame Line; there muſt be likewiſe ſome grateful Cadences, of which there are ſeveral Rules laid down in treating about *Caſura's*, *Synalepha's*, *the Length of Words*, and the like. Beſides this, there muſt be ſome *Tenſes of Verbs*, *ſome Moods*, *ſome Regimens*, *ſome Conſtructions*, and ſome Words proper only to Verſe, and which Proſe knows nothing of.

But above all, there muſt be in Verſe the *Turn*, and ſome ways of ſpeaking that are elevated, bold, and metaphorical; which are ſo proper to this kind of Writing, that with-

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* Ramoque ſedens miſerabile *Carmen* Integrat. *Virg. Geor.* 4. † Ducite ab urbe domum, mea *Carmina*, ducite Daphnim. *Carmina* vel cœlo poſſunt deducere lunam *Carminibus* Circe ſocios mutavit Ulyſſis. *Ecl.* 8. ‡ Lex horrendi *Carminis* erat: Duûmviri perduellionem judicent, ſi à Duûmviris provocatione cer.âtur, provocatione certato, *&c. Tit. Liv. Hiſt. L.* 1. || Rem *Carmine* ſigno: Æneas hæc de Dinais Victoribus Armis. *Virg. Æneid. l.* 3. * Tumulo ſuperaddite *Carmen*; Daphnis ego in ſylvis hinc uſque ad ſidera notus, Formoſi pecoris cuſtos, formoſior ipſe. *Virg. Ecl.* 5.

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out them the most exact placing of long and short Syllables is not so much Verse as Prose in Metre: And, on the contrary, these bold Expressions, so proper to Verse, when used in a Discourse that has not Feet nor Poetical Numbers, do give it such an Air of Verse, that it is not so properly Prose, as a kind of Poesie without Numbers, and as *Horace* says, *Disjecti Membra Poetæ.*

As * *Nature* does not inspire into us the Rules of Poetry and Verse; so neither does *Art* and *Study* help us to that Air, that Force, and that Elevation, in which *Horace* discovers something that is Divine, and which only makes a Man deserve the Name of Poet. This is an Accomplishment a Man should be born with, owing either to the Excellency of his Nature, or to some happy Transports; but withal so extraordinary, that the *Ancients*, and † *Aristotle* himself, stile them Fits of *Enthusiasm* or *Frensie*: Yet still there is to be supposed an exact and solid Judgment to master this Frensie and Imagination of the Poet.

From what has been said, we may conclude that the *End* of Poetry is to please: That its *Cause* is either the Excellency of the Poet's Nature, or the Poetick Frensie, and these Trans-

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* Ego nec studium sine divite venâ, nec rude quid prosit video ingenium. *Hor. Poet.*

† Εὐφυοῦς ἡ Ποιητικὴ ἐστιν, ἢ μανικοῦ. Arist. Poet. cap. 17.

ports

ports of Spirit, that are to be govern'd by Judgment. Its *Matter* is the long and ſhort Syllables, the Numbers it is made up of, and the Words which *Grammar* furniſhes it with, as well as Proſe. And its *Form* is the ranging of all theſe Things in ſuch exact and charming Verſes, as may beſt expreſs the Thoughts of the Author after the manner we have been deſcribing.

But after all, how confin'd is all this, if we conſider the great Name of Poet in the Honour *Homer* and *Virgil* did it, and in all the Extent it is capable of! What we have ſaid about it has nothing of Praiſe-worthy in it, but what ev'ry pitiful Tranſlator may pretend to, and what the War of *Catiline* turn'd into Verſe might beſtow upon him, that would tranſpoſe the Proſe of *Salluſt* after this manner. 'Tis with Reaſon then that we diſtinguiſh theſe mean Subjects from *great Poetry*, by giving them the name of *Verſification*; and that we make, as it were, two diſtinct Arts of *Verſification* and *Poetry*. In a Word, there is as much Difference between the Art of Making Verſes, and that of Inventing Poems, as there is between *Grammar* and *Rhetorick*.

This great Art conſiſts chiefly in the *Fable*, in the manner of Expreſſing Things by Allegories and Metaphors, and in the Invention of ſome probable Matter; that is, of ſome Actions, under which the Poet very charmingly diſguiſes the Truths he would have us learn. This is ſo proper to the Poet, that even in the

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Expreſſion * *Ariſtotle* recommends nothing ſo much as the *Metaphor*. Which agrees very well with that which we have already ſaid about the Nature of Poetry. For the *Fables* are ſo many Allegorical Diſguiſes, and an Allegory is nothing elſe but a Series and Chain of Metaphors linked together.

We ſhall ſpeak of the *Fable*, and theſe important Matters in the Sequel of this Treatiſe. We ſhall here only make this one Reflection; That the true Poems, and ſuch as have more of the Eſſence and Nature of *Great Poetry* than the other, are the *Epopéa*, the *Tragedy*, and the *Comedy*; for they are all Allegorical and Fabulous. Nor has † *Ariſtotle* in his *Poetry* undertaken to treat of any more than theſe three Sorts. If we compare them together, the *Epopéa* will excel the other two by that great Liberty it takes of uſing Metaphors and perpetual Alluſions in the Fables. Allegorical Expreſſions would be more obſcure upon the Stage, and would have ſomething that is leſs probable in the Mouth of the Actors we hear ſpeak, than in the Narration of a Poet, who writes purely to be read. *Comedy* muſt likewiſe yield to *Tragedy*, becauſe it has little of

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* Τὸ δ᾽ μέγιστον τὸ Μεταφορικὸν εἶναι. Poet. c. 22.

† Περὶ μὲν δὴ τῆς ἑξαμέτρου μιμητικῆς καὶ τῆς Κωμῳδίας ὕστερον ἐρῦμεν. Περὶ δὲ Τραγῳδίας λέγωμεν. Poet. c. 6.

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Elevation, and the manner of its Actors Speaking, is too Natural and Familiar.

This very Thing has made ſome People queſtion whether * *Comedy* were a true *Poem* or no. Which Difficulty is wholly grounded upon this general Notion, *That a Poem is a Diſcourſe in Verſe.* Now in the *Latin Comedy*, the Diſcourſe has nothing in it of Verſe, but Feet and Numbers. This indeed is enough for ſuch a Poetical Subject as *Comedy* is. And we ſuppoſe in this we are of *Horace*'s Opinion, at leaſt he attributes this Doubt to a very few Perſons.

But this Meaſure only, without any Air to diſtinguiſh the Diſcourſe from Proſe, makes no Verſes: And for this Reaſon has † *Horace* call'd his *Satyrs* by a Proſe Name; viz. *Sermones.* His *Epiſtles* are the ſame. His *Odes* are of a different Air, and theſe he calls by a Poetical Name, *Carmina.*

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* Idcirco quidam Comœdia necne Poema eſſet quæſivere: quod acer ſpiritus ac vis nec Verbis nec rebus ineſt; niſi quod pede certo differt ſermoni ſermo Merus. *Hor. Lib.* 1. *Sat.* 4.

† Primum ego me illorum dederim quibus eſſe Poetas, Excerpam numero; neque enim concludere Verſum Dixeris eſſe ſatis; neque ſi quis ſcribat uti nos Sermoni propiora, putes hunc eſſe Poetam. *Ibid.*

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The Caſe is not the ſame with Subjects that are not Poetical, but writ in Verſe, and adorn'd with Fables and Allegories; as, the *Georgicks* of *Virgil*, *Lucan*'s *Pharſalia*, *the Punick War of Silius Italicus*, and the like. The Truth on't is, theſe Fables and Allegories are not ſufficient for an *Epopéa*, and its main Action, that ought to be a *Fable*; ſo that we do not take the *Georgicks* or the *Pharſalia* to be an *Epopéa*; but yet this ſhould not hinder us from thinking them to be true Poems for all that.

But if a Man writes an *Epopéa* in Proſe, would it be an *Epick Poem*? No, I think not; for a Poem is a *Diſcourſe in Verſe*. But yet this would not hinder its being an *Epopéa*; juſt as a *Tragedy* in Proſe is ſtill a *Tragedy*, though it be not a *Tragick Poem*. They who have queſtion'd whether the *Latin Comedy* were a *Poem* or no, never doubted but it was a *Comedy*.

I ſhould have ſaid leſs upon ſuch trite Matters, but that I was aſham'd to take no notice at all what a *Poem* or a *Verſe* was, being to treat ſo largely about the *Epick Poem*.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Fable.

* *Ariſtotle* ſays, *The Fable is the principal Part of the Poem, and that 'tis as it were the very Soul of it.* Therefore we muſt look for the *Nature* of the *Epopéa* in that of the *Fable*, and conſider *That* as the chief Foundation of the Poem, as the Principle that gives Life and Motion to all its Parts, and ſets all its Faculties on work. We have indeed begun to define the *Epopéa* by the Definition we gave of the *Fable*; for the *Fable* is a Diſcourſe invented to form Men's Manners by Inſtructions diſguis'd under the Allegories of one ſingle Action.

There are ſeveral ſorts of *Fables*, which one may treat after very different ways. The *Poet* forms his from that which is moſt excellent in each of theſe ſorts.

There are reckon'd three ſorts of *Fables*. The firſt fall under the Names of Men and Gods, and are call'd *Rational*; the ſecond are only compriſed under the Names of Beaſts, and derive their Name of *Moratæ* from the humane Manners, which are attributed to

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* Ἀρχὴ μὲν οὖν καὶ οἷον ψυχὴ μῦθος. Poet. c. 6.

them;

them; and the laſt are a Mixture of theſe two ſorts of Perſonages, and are call'd *Mix'd*.

The *Epick Fables* are *Rational*. Nor do I think that the Liberty *Homer* has taken of making a Horſe ſpeak only once in his *Iliad*, ought to make this *Fable* be counted a *mix'd* one. I ſhould rather reckon this incident among the *Machines* and *Miracles*; as we read in the *Roman Hiſtory* it ſometimes happen'd, and as we know it did in *Balaam's Aſs*.

Beſides, 'twas ſuch a common Thing in thoſe Times to make uſe of theſe ſorts of *Fables*, and to bring in brute Beaſts, and even Trees ſpeaking: And this Cuſtom was ſo generally look'd upon as a Mark of Learning, a Genius, and Eloquence; that had *Homer* us'd it oftner, I do not ſee how any one could blame this *Fable* for any Irregularity. But in ſhort, this Cuſtom of making Beaſts ſpeak is ſo little reliſh'd by theſe laſt Ages, that even *Homer's* Example would not make it excuſeable in any of our modern Writers.

However 'tis, this inconſiderable Incident, which does not hinder but the *Epick Fable* may be reckon'd among the *Rational* ones, will not hinder it from being plac'd among the *Probable* ones; though this Qualification be not at all neceſſary for the *Fable in general*.

In fine, the Action of a *Fable* may be ſerious, great, and important; or familiar, low, and vulgar. It may be either perfect or defective; writ in Verſe or Proſe; ſwell'd to a

large Diſcourſe, or expreſs'd in a few Words; recited by the Author, or repreſented by the Perſons who are the ſole Actors in it. And all theſe different ways make no Alteration in the Eſſence, and in the Nature of the *Fable*.

Excepting the Repreſentation, which the *Epick Poet* leaves the Stage to be Maſter of, he takes always the moſt excellent, and the moſt noble Method. So that the *Epick Action* is grave, important, compleat, and rehearſed in a long train of Verſes.

One may add to this, that there are ſome *Fables*, which conſiſt leſs in Action than in Speaking; as that *Fable*, for inſtance, which ridicules the fooliſh Vanity of thoſe Men, who attribute all the Glory of an Event to themſelves, for the producing of which they contributed nothing but their own unprofitable Preſence. The *Fable* repreſents them under the Allegory of a *Fly*, which lighting upon a Chariot, and ſeeing her ſelf in the midſt of a Cloud of Duſt, which the Chariot-Wheels and the Horſe-Feet raiſed in the Air, cries out; *O Gemini! What a Duſt do I make?* The *Epick* is not of this ſort of *Fables*, but of thoſe which imitate an Action.

Theſe then are the Differences which ſpecifie the *Epick Fable*, and diſtinguiſh it from all others. It is *Rational* and *Probable*; it imitates an Action that is compleat and important; it is long and rehears'd in Verſe; but neither of theſe Properties change its *Nature*, nor

nor make it less a *Fable*, than those which are publish'd in *Æsop*'s Name.

So much for the Sorts and Differences of the *Fable*, now for its Parts.

* *Aristotle* says, that the *Fable* is a Composition of several Things. And in Truth two Things do compose it, which are as it were its two essential Parts. The one is *Truth*, which serves as a Foundation to it; and the other is *Fiction*, which Allegorically disguises this *Truth*, and gives it the *Form of a Fable*.

The *Truth* lies conceal'd; and is that Piece of *Morality* the Poet would teach us. The *Romans* made use of this very Expression, when they said to † *Teach Fables* and *Tragedies*, instead of saying to *Act* and *Represent* them. The *Fiction* is the Action or the Words, whereby these Instructions are veil'd. In the Instance we just now propos'd, the *Truth* is this, that it is ridiculous to brag of any Thing we have no Hand in: And the *Fiction* is that pleasant Thought of a Fly riding upon a Chariot, and crying, *Bless me! What a Dust do I make?*

The *Truth* lies under no Difficulty here, since the *Moral* Instruction ought always to be true.

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* Λέγω δὲ τὸν μῦθον τὴν σύνθεσιν τῶν πραγμάτων.

† Vel qui Prætextas, vel qui docuere Togatas. *Hor. Poet.*

" But ſuppoſe the imitated Action be taken " out of *Hiſtory*, would this paſs for a *Fiction?* " The Difficulty is the ſame, if it be taken " from a *Fable* that is already known, ſince " after this manner, the Poet would as little " invent and feign it, as if he had found it " in *Hiſtory:* and yet if the Author feigns " nothing, we may well diſpute with him the " Name of Poet."

To this we anſwer, that the Poet ought to feign one General Action; then he ſhould look for the Names of ſome Perſons (to whom a parallel Action has either truly or probably happen'd) in *Hiſtory*, or ſome well-known *Fables:* And laſtly, he ought to place his Action under theſe Names. Thus it will be really feign'd and invented by the Author, and yet will ſeem to be taken out of ſome very ancient *Hiſtory* and *Fable.* This we ſhall explain by what follows: We will begin to do ſo by the Inſtance of a *Fable* compos'd after this Method.

CHAP. VII.

The Method of Compoſing a Fable.

THE firſt Thing we are to begin with for Compoſing a *Fable*, is to chuſe the Inſtruction, and the point of Morality, which is to ſerve

ſerve as its Foundation, according to the Deſign and End we propoſe to our ſelves.

I would, for Inſtance, exhort two Brothers, or any other Perſons, who hold an Eſtate in Common, to agree well together, the better to preſerve it: And this is the *End* of the *Fable*, and the firſt Thing I thought on.

For this purpoſe I endeavour to imprint upon their Minds this Maxim; *That a Miſunderſtanding between Friends is the Ruin of Families, and of all ſorts of Societies.* This Maxim which I make choice of, is the Point of Morality, and the *Truth* which ſerves as a Foundation to the *Fable* I would compoſe.

In the next place this *Moral Truth* muſt be reduc'd into Action, and a general Action muſt be feign'd in Imitation of the true and ſingular Actions of thoſe who have been ruin'd by a Miſunderſtanding that has happen'd among them. I ſay then, that ſeveral Perſons were engaged together to look after an Eſtate, which they hold in Common. They fall out with one another, and this Difference leaves them defenceleſs to the Will of an Enemy who ruins them.

This is the firſt *Platform* of a *Fable*. The Action, which this Recital preſents us with, has four Qualifications: It is *Univerſal*, it is *Imitated*, it is *Feign'd*, and it contains *Allegorically, a Moral Truth.* This *Model* then comprehends the two Eſſential Parts which compoſe the *Fable, viz.* the *Truth* and the *Fiction.* All this is common to all ſorts of *Fables.*

The Names that are given to the Perſonages do firſt ſpecifie a *Fable*. *Æſop* gives them the Names of Beaſts. " Once upon a time " (ſays he) two Dogs were ſet to keep a Flock " of Sheep, they fight with one another, and " leave the Sheep without Defence to the Mer- " cy of the Wolf, that commits what Ravage " he pleaſes among them." Theſe Names are the meaneſt of any. The *Action* is ſtill *General*, and the *Fiction* is altogether apparent.

We may diſguiſe the *Fiction*, render the Action more ſingular, and make it a *Rational Fable* by the Names of Men invented at Pleaſure. " *Pridamant* and *Orontes*, two Bro- " thers by a ſecond Marriage, were left very " rich by their Father's laſt Will and Teſta- " ment. They could not agree in ſharing " their Eſtates, and were ſo obſtinately bent " one againſt the other, that to provide for " their common Intereſt againſt *Clitander* " (their elder Brother by a former Marriage) " was the very leaſt of their Care. He very " dextrouſly foments their Quarrel, and keeps " them from minding the Deſign he has upon " them, by pretending he expected nothing " but a ſmall Gratuity by the Accommoda- " tions, which he daily propoſes, but never " urges home to them. In the mean time he " gains upon the Judges, and all others, who " were intruſted with this Affair; he procures " the Will to be cancell'd, and becomes Ma- " ſter of all that Eſtate he pretended he would

" have

" have gratified his Brothers with, though to
" his own Prejudice."

This *Fable* is a *Rational* and *Probable Fable*; but becauſe the Names are feign'd as well as the Things, and the Action is only particular, and the Families ordinary, it is neither an *Epick* nor *Tragick Fable*; and can only be manag'd in *Comedy*. For * *Ariſtotle* informs us, *That Comick Poets invent both the Names and the Things.*

In order to make this an Alamode *Comick Fable*, ſome Girl or another ſhould have been promiſed to *Clitander*; but the Will ſhould have put the Father upon altering his Deſign, and he ſhould have oblig'd her to have married one of theſe two rich Coxcombs, for whom ſhe had not the leaſt Fancy. And here the Comical Part might have been carried on very regularly even as the Poet pleas'd. But to return.

The *Fiction* might be ſo diſguis'd under the *Truth of Hiſtory*, that thoſe who are ignorant of the Poet's Art would believe that he had made no *Fiction*. But the better to carry on this Diſguiſe, ſearch muſt be made in *Hiſtory* for the Names of ſome Perſons to whom this feign'd Action might either *Probably* or *Really* have happen'd; and then muſt the Action be rehears'd under theſe known Names, with ſuch

* Συςήσαντες γὰρ τὸν μῦθον, διὰ τῶν οἰκότων, οὕτω τὰ τυχόντα ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθέασι. Poet. c. 9.

Circumſtances as alter nothing of the Eſſence either of the *Fable* or the *Moral:* As in the following Example.

" In the War King *Philip* the Fair had with " the *Flemings* in the Year 1302, he ſent out " his Army under the Command of *Robert* " Earl of *Artois* his General, and *Ralph* of " *Neſle* his Conſtable. When they were in " the Plain of *Courtray* in ſight of the Enemy, " the Conſtable ſays, *'Twas ſo eaſie to ſtarve* " *them, that it would be adviſeable not to* " *hazard the Lives of ſo many brave Men a-* " *gainſt ſuch vile and deſpicable Fellows.* " The *Earl* very haughtily rejects this Advice, " charging him with Cowardice and Treachery. " *We will ſee,* replies the Conſtable in a Rage, " *which of us has the moſt Loyalty and Bra-* " *very:* And with that away he rides directly " towards the Enemy, drawing all the *French* " Cavalry after him. This Precipitation, and " the Duſt they rais'd, hinder'd them from " diſcovering a large and deep River, beyond " which the *Flemings* were poſted. The " *French* were miſerably caſt away in the Tor- " rent. At this Loſs the Infantry were ſo " ſtartled, that they ſuffer'd themſelves to be " cut in pieces by the Enemy."

'Tis by this means that the *Fiction* may have ſome Agreement with the *Truth* it ſelf, and the Precepts of the Art do not contradict one another, though they order us to begin by feigning an Action, and then adviſe us to draw it from *Hiſtory*. As for the *Fiction* and *Fa-*

ble,

ble, it ſignifies little whether the Perſons are *Dogs*, or *Orontes* and *Pridamont*, or *Robert d'Artois* and *the Earl of Neſle*, or laſtly *Achilles* and *Agamemnon*.

'Tis time we ſhould now propoſe it in its juſt Extent under the two laſt Names in the *Iliad*. It is too narrow for an *Epopéa* under the former Names.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Fable of the Iliad.

THE *Fable* of the *Iliad*, at the bottom, is nothing elſe but that which I juſt now propos'd. I will treat of it here at large, becauſe I cannot give you a greater Light into this Doctrine, than by the Practice of *Homer*. 'Tis the moſt exact Model of the *Epopéa*, and the moſt uſeful Abridgment of all the Precepts of this Art; ſince in Truth, *Ariſtotle* himſelf has extracted them out of the Works of this great Poet.

In every Thing which a Man undertakes with Deſign, the *End* he propoſes to himſelf is always the firſt Thing which occurs in his Mind, and upon which he grounds the whole Work, and all its Parts. Thus, ſince the *Epick Poem* was invented to form the Manners

of Men, 'tis by this firſt View the Poet ought to begin.

The *School-men* treat of Vertues and Vices in general. The Inſtructions they give are proper for all Sorts of People, and for all Ages. But the Poet has a nearer Regard to his own Country, and the Neceſſities he ſees his own Nation lie under. 'Tis upon this account that he makes choice of ſome piece of Morality, the moſt proper and fitteſt he can imagine: And in order to preſs this home, he makes leſs uſe of Reaſoning, than of the force of Inſinuation; accommodating himſelf to the particular Cuſtoms and Inclinations of his Audience, and to thoſe which in the general ought to be commended in them. Let us now ſee how *Homer* has acquitted himſelf in all theſe Reſpects.

He ſaw the *Grecians*, for whom he deſign'd his Poems, were divided into as many States as they had Capital Cities. Each was a Body Politick, and had its Form of Government independent from all the reſt. And yet theſe diſtinct States were very often oblig'd to unite together in one Body againſt their common Enemies. And here we have two very different ſorts of Government, ſuch as cannot be very well comprehended in one Body of Morality, and in one ſingle Poem.

The Poet then has made two diſtinct *Fables* of them. The *One* is for all *Greece* united into one Body, but compos'd of Parts independent on one another, as they in Truth were:

And

And the *Other* is for each particular State, consider'd as they were in time of Peace, without the former Circumstances, and the necessity of being united.

As for the first sort of Government observable in the Union or rather in the Assembling of many Independent States: Experience has always made it appear, "That there is no-"thing like a due Subordination, and a right "Understanding between Persons to make the "Designs that are form'd and carried on by "several Generals to prosper. And on the "other hand, an universal Misunderstanding, "the Ambition of a General, and the Un-"der-Officers refusing to submit, have always "been the infallible and inevitable Bane of "these Confederacies." All sorts of States, and in particular the *Grecians*, have dearly experienc'd this Truth. So that the most useful and the most necessary Instructions that could be given them, was, to lay before their Eyes the Loss which both the People and the Princes themselves suffer'd by the Ambition and Discord of these last.

Homer then has taken for the Foundation of his *Fable* this great *Truth*; viz. *That a Misunderstanding between Princes is the Ruin of their own States.* "I sing (says he) the An-"ger of *Achilles*, so pernicious to the *Gre-"cians*, and the Cause of so many Heroes "Deaths, occasion'd by the Discord and Part-"ing of *Agamemnon* and this Prince."

But

But that this *Truth* may be compleatly and fully known, there is need of a second to back it. For it may be question'd, whether the ill Consequences which succeed a Quarrel were caused by that Quarrel; and whether a right Understanding does re-adjust those Affairs which Discord has put out of Order: That is to say, these Assembled States must be represented first as labouring under a Misunderstanding, and the ill Consequences thereof; and then as United and Victorious.

Let us now see how he has dispos'd of these Things in one General Action.

" Several Princes, independant on one ano-
" ther, were united against a Common Ene-
" my. He, whom they had Elected their *Ge-*
" *neral*, offers an Affront to the most Valiant
" of all the Confederates. This offended
" Prince was so far provok'd, that he with-
" drew himself, and obstinately refused to
" fight for the Common Cause. This Misun-
" derstanding gives the Enemy so much Ad-
" vantage, that the Confederates are very near
" quitting their Design very dishonourably.
" He himself who is withdrawn is not exempt
" from sharing in the Misfortunes he brought
" upon his Allies. For having permitted his
" intimate Friend to succour them in a great
" Necessity, this Friend is kill'd by the Ene-
" mies *General*. Thus being both made wiser
" at their own Cost, they are reconcil'd. And
" then this Valiant Prince gets the Victory,
" and revenges his own Wrongs by killing
" with

" with his own Hands him who had been the
" Death of his Friend."

This is the first *Platform* of the Poem, and the *Fiction*, which reduces into one important and universal Action, all the Particulars upon which it turns.

In the next place it must be render'd *Probable* by the Circumstances of *Times*, *Places*, and *Persons*; that is to say, If we would come up to the Precepts of our Masters, we must seek for some Persons already known by *History*, or other ways, by whom we may with Probability represent the Personages of this *Fable*. *Homer* has made choice of *the Siege of Troy*, and feign'd that this Action happen'd there. He has given the Name of *Achilles* to a valiant and angry Phantom; that of *Agamemnon* to his General, that of *Hector* to the Enemies Commander, and others to the rest, as is to be seen in his Poem.

Besides, he was oblig'd to accommodate himself to the Manners, Customs, and Genius of the *Greeks* his Auditors, the better to make them attend to the Instruction of his Poem, and to gain their Approbation by praising them, as far as the Faults he must of necessity make his Personages fall into, would admit. He admirably discharges all the Duties, by making these Brave Princes, and those Victorious People, to be *Grecians*, and the Fathers of those he had a Mind to Commend.

But in that Length and Extent which is given to these *Fables*, if we would not stuff

up

up the reſt with uſeleſs Ornaments and foreign Incidents, we muſt do ſomething elſe beſides propoſing the principal Point of Morality that is made uſe of. We muſt extend this Moral by its neceſſary Conſequences: As for Inſtance, in the Subject before us, 'tis not enough to know, that a good Underſtanding ought always to be maintain'd among Confederates: 'Tis likewiſe very material to know, that if there happens any Diviſion, great Care is to be taken, that it be kept from the Enemies Knowledge, that ſo they being ignorant of this Advantage, may not venture to make uſe of it.

In the ſecond place, when this Concord is but counterfeit, and only in appearance, one ſhould never preſs the Enemy too cloſely, nor oblige them to make uſe of all their Forces: For this would diſcover the Weakneſs that ought to be conceal'd from them.

The *Epiſode* of *Patroclus* does even to Admiration furniſh us with theſe two Inſtructions. For when he appear'd in the Arms of *Achilles*, the *Trojans*, who took him for *Achilles* himſelf, now reconciled and re-united to the Confederates, gave ground, and quitted the Advantages they had over the *Greeks*. But *Patroclus*, who ſhould have been contented with this Succeſs, preſſes upon *Hector* too boldly, and by obliging him to fight, diſcovers that it was not the true *Achilles* that was clad in his Armour, but a much more feeble Hero. So that *Hector* kills him, and re-gains

the

the Advantages which the *Trojans* had loſt upon the Conceit that *Achilles* was reconcil'd.

'Tis by ſuch ſort of *Fictions* that this great Poet has fill'd his Poem with Inſtructions ſo excellent for their Deſign, and whereby he has merited thoſe Praiſes which *Ariſtotle*, *Horace*, and all the *Ancients* have beſtow'd upon him.

CHAP. IX.

A Compariſon of the Fable *of the* Iliad, *with that of* Æſop.

THE better to make it appear that an *Epopéa* is a true *Fable*; and that this Term we give it is not Metaphorical or Figurative, but Proper and Natural; and that the Senſe is the ſame, as when we give the Name of *Fables* to the *Fictions* of *Æſop*: I ſhall here draw a Parallel between the *Fable* of the *Iliad*, and that of *Æſop*, which I have already mention'd.

Firſt then I ſay, that the *Moral Truth* and *Inſtruction* is apparently the ſame in both. *Æſop* and *Homer* would have us learn, *that a Miſunderſtanding between thoſe of the ſame Party, expoſes them to the Inſults of their Enemies, and their own Ruin: And that* Con-

Concord preſerves and renders them Victorious.

The *Fiction* is likewiſe the ſame. Both have feign'd a Confederacy of ſeveral Perſons together, for the Maintenance and Defence of their Intereſt againſt the Common Enemy. Again, both have feign'd ſome Diſtrubance that happen'd at firſt in this Union; and that thoſe who quarrell'd met with an equal ſhare of Misfortune. Laſtly, both have reſtor'd to the Party of theſe United Perſons, the Concord and Victory which was the conſequence of their Re-union.

There's nothing remains now but to give Names to thoſe feign'd Perſons. As for the Nature of the *Fable*, it matters little whether the Names of *Beaſts* or of *Men* be made uſe of. *Homer* has made choice of theſe laſt; and has given the Quality of Kings to his Perſonages. He has call'd them *Achilles*, *Agamemnon*, *Hector*, *Patroclus*, and has expreſſed by the name of *Grecians*, that Intereſt which the Confederates were oblig'd to maintain. *Æſop* in his way, has given the Names of *Beaſts* to all his Perſonages: The *Dogs* are the Confederates, the *Wolf* is their Enemy, and he has called the *Sheep*, what the Poet has term'd the *Grecians*.

One ſays, "That whilſt the * Confederate "Kings quarrell'd, *Hector* their Enemy makes

* Delirant reges plectuntur achivi. *Hor. Ep.* 2. *ad Loll.*

"havock

" havock of the poor *Grecians*, who pay dear-
" ly for the Folly of their Princes; and when
" the Allies, mov'd with their Loſs, were Re-
" united, they put *Hector* to flight and kill
" him".

The other ſays the very ſame, " That whilſt
" the *Dogs* did bite and tear one another, the
" *Wolf* broke in upon the *Sheep*: And when
" the *Dogs*, ſeeing the ravage of this Enemy,
" were good Friends again, they made him fly
" for it, and killed him".

The *Fable* of *Homer* is a *Rational one*, and that of *Æſop* is not. But this is no reaſon why one is more or leſs a *Fable* than the other. * *Horace* calls the *Iliad* a *Fable*, tho' the Names are Human; juſt as the Stories of *Æſop* are call'd *Fables* under the Names of *Dogs*, *Lyons*, *Jupiter*, *The Frogs*, and the like.

Homer has ſtretch'd out his *Fable* by long Harangues, by Deſcriptions, by Similitudes, and by particular Actions: In like manner, might one amplify that of *Æſop* without ſpoiling it. One need only relate what provok'd theſe *Dogs* to quarrel, and to deſcribe the riſe of their Anger with all its Circumſtances: To make fine Deſcriptions of the *Plain* where the *Sheep* were feeding, and of ſome neighbouring *Foreſt*, which ſerv'd the

* Fabula quæ Paridis narratur propter Amorem
Græcia Barbariæ lento colliſa duello. *Ibid.*

Wolf

Wolf for a Shelter and Retreat: To give this Enemy ſome little Cubs to breed up, to make them follow their Sire in the Queſt of their Prey, and to deſcribe the Booty they take at ſeveral times.

One ſhould not likewiſe omit the *Genealogy* of theſe *Heroes*. The *Wolf* ſhould boaſt of his Deſcent from *Lycaon*; and one of the *Dogs* ſhould have iſſu'd in a direct Line from the great *Celeſtial Dog*, and the *Canicula*. This ſhould be the *Hero* of the Poem, for he would be very Hot and Cholerick. He would do well to repreſent the Perſonage of *Achilles*; and the Folly of a certain *Ajax* his Kinſman, would be a handſom Proof of this Nobility, and of an Origin ſo Divine as that is. There is no need of any thing farther to engage Heaven in this Quarrel, and to divide the Gods into Parties. For the Gods have as much to do in the *Republick of Æſop*, as in the *States of Homer*; witneſs *Jupiter*, who was ſo far concern'd as to appoint Kings over the Commonwealth of the *Frogs*.

And here we have Matter enough to give this Subject a very large Extent, provided we have Expreſſions to anſwer it, and take care to inſert as often * as *Homer* has:

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* Edita ne brevibus pereat mihi charta libellis,
Dicatur potius, τὸν δ' ἀπαμείβετο. Martial, L. 1.

Τὸν

Τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς.

For this fine Epithet for a *Dog*, πόδας ὠκὺς, a *Fleet-runner*, ought by no means to be omitted.

In ſhort, *Homer* does likewiſe reſemble *Æſop*, in that he as well as the other had a great mind to make the *Beaſts* ſpeak in the Perſon of *Xanthus* the Horſe of *Achilles*.

We conclude then, that the Name of *Fable* which is given to the *Fable* of the *Iliad*, and that of *Æſop*, is neither *Equivocal* nor *Analogous*, but *Synonymous* and equally *Proper*; that all the *Qualities* which make any difference between them, do by no means affect either the *Foundation*, the *Nature*, or the *Eſſence* of the *Fable*, but only conſtitute the different Sorts of it; and laſtly, that if a *Fable* be *Rational*, *Probable*, *Serious*, *Important*, *mix'd with Divinities*, *Amplified* and *Rehears'd in Verſe*, it will be an *Epick Poem*: If it has not theſe Conditions, it will be another kind of *Fable*.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The Fable *of the* Odyſſeis.

THE *Odyſſeis* was not deſign'd as the *Iliad*, to inſtruct all the States of *Greece* join'd and confederated in one Body, but for each State in particular. A State is compos'd of two Parts; The *Head* which commands is the firſt, and the *Members* which obey make up the other. There are Inſtructions requiſite for the *Governour*, and ſome likewiſe neceſſary for the *Subjects*: For him to rule well, and for them to be rul'd by him.

There are two Vertues neceſſary to one in Authority; *Prudence* to order, and *Care* to put in Execution the Orders he has given. The *Prudence* of a *Politician* is not acquir'd but by a long Experience in all ſorts of Buſineſs, and by an Acquaintance with all the different Forms of Governments and States. The *Care* of the Execution ſuffers not him that has order'd it, to rely upon others, but it requires his own Preſence; and Kings who are abſent from their States are in danger of loſing them, and give way to great Diſorders.

Theſe two Points might be eaſily united in one and the ſame Man. * "A King abſent

* Dic mihi Muſa virum captæ poſt tempora Trojæ, Qui Mores hominum multorum vidit & urbes. *Hor. Poet.*

"from

" from his Kingdom viſits the Courts of ſeve-
" ral Princes, where he learns the Cuſtoms of
" different Nations. From hence there natu-
" rally ariſes a vaſt number of Incidents, of
" Dangers, and of Paſſages, that are very uſe-
" ful for a Political Inſtruction: And on the
" other ſide, this Abſence gives way to the Diſ-
" orders which happen in his own Kingdom,
" and which end not till his Return, whoſe
" ſole Preſence can re-eſtabliſh all Things."
Thus the *Abſence* of a King is the ſame, and has the ſame effect in this *Fable*, as the *Diviſion* had in the former.

The *Subjects* have ſcarce any need but of one general Maxim, which is *to ſuffer themſelves to be govern'd by, and to obey faithfully ſome Reaſon or other which ſeems to them contrary to the Orders they have received.* It were eaſie to join this to what we have already ſaid, by beſtowing on this Wiſe and Induſtrious Prince ſuch Subjects, as in his abſence would obey, not the Orders they receiv'd, but what appear'd to them more reaſonable: And by demonſtrating from the Misfortunes this Diſobedience draws upon them, the Evil Conſequences which almoſt infallibly attend theſe particular Conducts, which are diſtinct from the general Notion of him who ought to Govern.

But as 'tis neceſſary that the Princes in the * *Iliad* ſhould be Cholerick and Quarrelſome:

* Ira quidem communiter urit utrumque. *Hor.*

So

So 'tis neceſſary in the *Fable* of the *Odyſſeis* that the chief Perſonage ſhould be Sage, and Prudent. This raiſes a difficulty in the *Fiction*; becauſe this Perſonage ought to be abſent for the two Reaſons aforemention'd, which are Eſſential to the *Fable*; and which conſtitute the principal Part thereof: But he cannot be abſent from his own Home without offending againſt another Maxim of equal Importance; *viz. That a King ſhould never leave his own Country.*

It is true, there are ſometimes ſuch Neceſſities as ſufficiently excuſe the *Prudence* of a *Politician*: But ſuch a Neceſſity is a Thing important enough to ſupply Matter for another Poem, and this Multiplication of the Action would have been Vicious. To prevent this, firſt this neceſſity and the departure of the *Hero* muſt be diſjoin'd from the Poem: And in the ſecond Place, the *Hero* having been oblig'd to abſent himſelf for a Reaſon antecedent to the Action, and diſtinct from the *Fable*; he ought not to embrace this Opportunity of inſtructing himſelf, and ſo abſent himſelf voluntarily from his own Government. For at this rate, his Abſence would have been ſtill voluntary, and one might with Reaſon lay to his Charge, the Diſorders which might have happen'd thereon.

Thus in the Conſtitution of the *Fable*, the Poet ought not to take for his Action, and for the Foundation of his Poem, the Departure of a Prince from his own Country, nor his voluntary

luntary Stay in any other Place; but his *Return*, and this Return hinder'd against his Will. This is the first Idea, the Poet gives us of it. * His *Hero* appears at first in a desolate Island, sitting upon the side of the Sea, which with Tears in his Eyes he looks upon as the Obstacle, that had hinder'd him so long from returning home, and visiting his own dear Country.

And lastly, since this forc'd Delay has something in it that is most Natural and Usual to such as make Voyages by Sea: *Homer* has judiciously made choice of a Prince whose Kingdom was in an Island.

We see then how he has feign'd all this Action, allowing his *Hero* a great many Years, because he stood in need of so many to instruct himself in Prudence and Policy.

" A Prince had been oblig'd to forsake his " Native Country, and to head an Army of " his Subjects in a Foreign Expedition. Ha- " ving gloriously perform'd this Enterprise, he " was for marching Home again, and thither " would have conducted his Subjects. But " spite of all the Attempts, which his Eager- " ness to return Home again put him upon, " There are Tempests which stop him by the " way for several Years together, and cast him

* Τὸν δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς εὗρε καθήμενον οὐδὲ ποτ' ὄσσε Δακρύοφιν τέρβοντο κατείβετο δὲ γλυκὺς αἰὼν Νόστον ὀδυρομένῳ. Odyss. 5.

" upon

" upon ſeveral Countries very different from
" one another as to their Manners and Govern-
" ment. In the Dangers he was in, his Com-
" panions, not always following his Orders,
" periſh'd through their own Fault. The
" Grandees of his Country do very ſtrangely
" abuſe his Abſence, and raiſe no ſmall Diſ-
" orders at Home. They conſume his Eſtate,
" conſpire to make away with his Son, would
" conſtrain his Queen to chooſe one of them
" for her Husband, and indulge themſelves in
" all theſe Violences ſo much the more, be-
" cauſe they were perſwaded he would never
" return. But at laſt he returns, and diſcove-
" ring himſelf to his Son and ſome others,
" who had contina'd Loyal to him, he is an
" Eye-witneſs of the Inſolence of his Enemies,
" puniſhes them according to their Deſerts,
" and reſtores to the Iſland that Tranquillity
" and Repoſe, which they had been Strangers
" to during his Abſence."

As the *Truth*, which ſerves as a Foundation to this *Fiction*, and which with it makes the *Fable*, is, *That the abſence of a Perſon from his own Home, or who has not an Eye to what is done there, is the Cauſe of great Diſorders*: So the principal Action, and the moſt Eſſential one, is the *Abſence of the Hero*. This fills almoſt all the Poem: For not only this bodily Abſence laſted ſeveral Years, but even when the *Hero* return'd, he does not diſcover himſelf; and this prudent Diſguiſe, from whence he reap'd ſo much Advantage, has the ſame

Effect

Effect upon the Authors of the Diſorders, and all others who knew him not, as his real Abſence had; ſo that he is abſent as to them, till the very Moment he puniſh'd them.

After the Poet had thus compos'd his *Fable*, and join'd the *Fiction* to the *Truth*, he then makes Choice of *Ulyſſes*, the King of the Iſle of *Ithaca*, to maintain the Character of his chief Perſonage, and beſtow'd the reſt upon *Telemachus*, *Penelope*, *Antinous*, and others, whom he calls by what Names he pleaſes.

I ſhall not here inſiſt upon the many excellent Advices, which are as ſo many Parts, and natural Conſequences of the Fundamental Truth; and which the Poet very dexterouſly lays down in thoſe Fictions, which are the *Epiſodes* and Members of the entire Action, ſuch for Inſtance are theſe Advices: *Not to intrude ones ſelf into the Myſteries of Government, which the Prince keeps ſecret to himſelf.* This is repreſented to us by the Winds ſhut up in a Bull-hide, which the miſerable Companions of *Ulyſſes* muſt needs be ſo fooliſh as to pry into: *Not to ſuffer ones ſelf to be led away by the ſeeming Charms of an idle and lazy Life*, to which the * *Sirens* Songs invite Men: *Not to ſuffer ones ſelf to be ſenſualiz'd by Pleaſures*, like thoſe who were chang'd into Brutes by *Circe*: And a great many other Points of Morality neceſſary for all ſorts of People.

* Improba Siren Deſidia. *Hor.*

This Poem is more uſeful to the *Vulgar*, than the *Iliad* is, where the Subjects ſuffer rather by the ill Conduct of their Princes, than through their own Fault. But in the *Odyſſeis*, 'tis not the Fault of *Ulyſſes* that is the Ruin of his Subjects. This wiſe Prince did all he could to make them Sharers in the Benefit of his Return. Thus the Poet in the *Iliad* ſays, "He "ſings the Anger of *Achilles*, which had "caus'd the Death of ſo many *Grecians*"; and on the contrary, in the * *Odyſſeis* he tells his Readers, "That the Subjects periſh'd "through their own Fault."

Notwithſtanding it is to be confeſs'd, that theſe great Names of *Kings*, *Hero's*, *Achilles*, *Agamemnon*, and *Ulyſſes*, do no leſs denote the meaneſt *Burghers*, than they do the *Ceſars*, the *Pompeys*, and the *Alexanders* of the Age. The *Commonalty* are as ſubject as the *Grandees*, to loſe their Eſtates, and ruin their Families by Anger and Diviſions, by negligence and want of taking care of their Buſineſs. They ſtand in as much need of *Homer*'s Leſſons, as Kings; they are as capable of profiting thereby; and 'tis as well for the *Small* as the *Great*, that the Morality of the *Schools*, that of the *Fable*, and that of the *Chair* deliver thoſe *Truths* we have been juſt ſpeaking of.

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* Αὐτὰρ γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο. Odyſſ. 1.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Fable *of the* Æneid.

IN the *Fable* of the *Æneid* we are not to expect that *Simplicity*, which *Ariſtotle* eſteem'd ſo Divine in *Homer*. But tho' the Fortune of the *Roman Empire* envied the Poet this Glory, yet the vaſt Extent of the Matter it furniſhes him with, ſtarts up ſuch Difficulties as require more Spirit and Conduct, and has put us upon ſaying that there is ſomething in the *Æneid* more Noble than in the *Iliad*. Theſe very Difficulties we are to ſolve, and they call upon us for our utmoſt Care and Attention.

There was a great deal of difference between the *Greeks* and the *Romans*. Theſe laſt were under no Obligation, as were the former, either of living in ſeparated and independent States; or of frequent confederating together againſt the common Enemy. If in this reſpect, we would compare our two Poets together, *Virgil* had but one Poem to make, and this ought to be more like the *Odyſſeis* than the *Iliad*, ſince the *Roman* State was govern'd by only one Prince.

But (without mentioning the Inconveniences the *Latin Poet* might meet with in forming a *Fable* upon the ſame Foundation, which the *Greek* had laid before him) the *Roman*

State furniſh'd him with Matter different enough to help him to avoid treading in the Footſteps of him that went before him, and to preſerve to him the Glory of a primary Invention. *Homer* in the *Odyſſeis* ſpoke only for States already eſtabliſh'd, and the *Roman Empire* was but of a new Date. It was the Change of a *Commonwealth* (to which *Caſar*'s Subjects had been always extreamly biggoted) into a *Monarchy*, which till then they could never endure. Thus, the Inſtructions, which the Poet ought to give both to Prince and People, were quite different from thoſe *Homer* left his Countrymen.

He ought to inſtruct *Auguſtus* as the Founder of a great Empire, and to inſpire into him as well as his Succeſſors, the ſame Spirit and Conduct which had rais'd this *Empire* to ſuch a Grandour. A very expert *Roman*, and a great *Politician* (no leſs than * *Cicero* himſelf) informs us, " That good Humour and " Humanity was ſo far Eſſential to this State, " that it was predominant even in the very " midſt of War; and that nothing but an ab- " ſolute Neceſſity could put a ſtop to its good " Effects." And he adds, " That when this " Conduct was loſt, and this Genius, which " gave Life to the State, was gone, there was " nothing left but bare Walls, and what in

* Eventus bellorum erant aut mites, aut neceſſarii, &c. *Cic. 2. de offic.*

" pro-

"propriety of Speech might be term'd a dead "Carcaſe." In ſhort, he ſhews the Advantages which a mild and moderate Government has over a cruel and ſevere Conduct, which inſpires Men with nothing but a ſlaviſh Fear.

This then is the Inſtruction *Virgil* would give the *Roman Emperors*, who began in the Perſon of *Auguſtus* to be ſettled upon the Throne. This Inſtruction has two Parts, as each of *Homer*'s had. The firſt comprehends the Misfortunes which attend a Tyrannical and Violent Reign: And the ſecond the Happineſs, which is the Conſequence of a mild Government. *Homer* has plac'd both the Parts of each *Fable* in one and the ſame Perſon, *Achilles* at firſt is at Variance with the Confederates, and afterwards is Reconcil'd to them: *Ulyſſes* is abſent from home, and at laſt returns thither: And in all this there is nothing of Difficulty. But *Virgil* could not repreſent in one and the ſame Perſon, a *Heroe*, who by his Violence and Impiety was the Ruin of his Country; and who afterwards by his Piety and Juſtice, reſtor'd it to its former Glory. This inequality of Manners and Conduct would have been intolerable, and eſpecially in that Brevity, which the Recital of an *Epick Poem* requires; beſides, ſuch a ſudden Change is never to be rely'd on; Men would think it Hypocritical, and fear a very quick return of the old Tyranny. The Poet then is oblig'd to make uſe of two different Perſonages, to

maintain the two Parts of his exemplary Inſtruction.

Beſides, ſeveral weighty Reaſons did indiſpenſably oblige him to put Humanity and Good-Nature in the Manners of his *Hero*, and to make *Piety* his predominant Quality, and the very Soul of all his Vertues. One of theſe great Reaſons is the deſire and neceſſity he lay under of pleaſing his chief Auditor, who alone was more conſiderable than all the reſt. *Auguſtus Cæſar* did nothing to ſettle himſelf upon the Throne, but what his *Piety* put him upon undertaking; or at leaſt he had a Mind the World ſhould think ſo. This is the Judgment which the moſt Prudent paſs upon him, even after he was Dead, when he was no longer the Subject of Men's Flatteries, or their Fear. This * *Cornelius Tacitus* informs us of.

The Reaſons why the Poet ſpoke thus of the New Eſtabliſhment, were owing to the *Subjects* of *Auguſtus*, who made up the other part of the Audience; and the ſecond Object of his Morality. He was oblig'd to make them

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* Apud prudentes vita ejus variè extollebatur, arguebatúrve. Hi Pietate erga parentem & neceſſitudine Reip. in qua nullus tunc legibus locus, ad bella Civilia actum: Pauca admodum vi tractata, quo cæteris quies eſſet. Dicebatur contra: Pietatem erga Parentem, & tempora Reipub. obtentui ſumpta. *Hiſt. Lib.* 1.

lay

lay aside the old Antipathy they had to *Monarchy*, to convince them of the Justice, and the legal Prerogative of *Augustus*, to divert them from so much as desiring to oppose his Designs, and to raise in them a Love and Veneration for this Prince.

Religion has always had a most powerful Influence over the Minds of the Vulgar. The first *Roman Kings*, and the new *Emperors*, made use thereof, by joyning the *Sacerdotal* to the *Regal* Office. The Poet likewise us'd his utmost Care in searching for all the Advantages he could derive from thence, by making it the chief Foundation of his Work. He makes it appear, "That the great Revolu-"tions, which happen in States, are brought "about by the Appointment and Will of God: "That those who oppose them are Impious, "and have been punish'd according to their "Demerits. For Heaven never fails to pro-"tect the Heroes it makes Choice of, to carry "on and execute its great Designs." This *Maxim* serves for the Foundation of the *Æneid*; and is that first part of the *Fable* which we call the *Truth*.

Besides, the Poet was oblig'd to represent his *Heroe* free from all manner of Violence, and elected King by brave and generous People, who thought it an Honour to obey him, tho' they might lawfully have been their own Sovereigns, and have chosen what Form of Government they pleas'd. In short it was requisite that the Justice of his Cause, like that

of *Auguſtus*, ſhould have been grounded upon the *Rights of War*.

In a Word, the *Hero* ſhould have been like *Auguſtus*, a *New Monarch, the Founder of an Empire, a Lawgiver, a Pontifex, and a great Commander*.

The Neceſſity of reducing all theſe Things into one Body, and under the Allegories of a ſingle Action, makes it appear how great a difference there is between the Deſigns of *Homer*, and that of *Virgil*: And that if the *Latin Poet* did imitate the *Greek*, yet the Application of it is ſo remote and difficult, that it ſhould never make his Poem paſs for a new Copy, nor rob him of the Glory of the Invention.

Let us ſee then the Collection which *Virgil* has made of all theſe Matters; and the general *Fiction*, which together with the *Truths* it diſguiſes, makes up the *Fable* and Life of the Poem.

" The Gods preſerve a Prince amidſt the " Ruin of a mighty State, and make Choice " of him to be the Maintainer of their Reli- " ligion, and the Eſtabliſher of a more great " and glorious Empire than the firſt. This " very *Hero* is likewiſe elected King by the " general Conſent of thoſe, who had eſcap'd " the univerſal Wrack of that Kingdom. He " conducts them through Territories from " whence his Anceſtors came, and by the way " inſtructed himſelf in all that was neceſſary " for a *King*, a *Prieſt*, and the *Founder of a*

" *Monar-*

" *Monarchy.* He arrives and likewiſe finds " in this new Country, the Gods and Men diſ- " pos'd to entertain him, and to allow him " Subjects and Territories. But a neighbour- " ing Prince, blinded by Ambition and Jea- " louſie, could not ſee the Juſtice and the Or- " ders of Heaven, but oppoſes his Eſtabliſh- " ment, and is aſſiſted by the Valour of a " King, whoſe Cruelty and Impiety had di- " veſted him of his States. This Oppoſition, " and the War this pious Stranger was * forc'd " to, renders his Eſtabliſhment more juſt by " the Right of Conqueſt, and more Glorious " by the overcoming and cutting off his Ene- " mies."

The Model being thus fram'd, there was nothing wanting but to look into *Hiſtory*, or into ſome Authentick *Fables*, for *Hero's* whoſe Names he might borrow, and whom he might engage to repreſent his Perſonages. The Obligation he lay under of accommodating himſelf to the Manners and Religion of his Country, invited him to look after them in the *Roman Hiſtory*. But what Action could he take thence, which might furniſh him with a Revolution and Eſtabliſhment of Government, that was proper to his Purpoſe? *Brutus* had expelled the Kings, and placed the People in that which they then called *their Liberty*: But

* Teſtaturq; Deos iterum ſe ad prælia cogi. *Æneid. Lib.* 12.

this Name was Odious and Prejudicial to *Auguſtus*; and this Action was quite oppoſite to the Deſign which the Poet had of confirming the Re-eſtabliſhment of *Monarchy*. *Romulus* firſt founded *Rome*, but he laid the Walls thereof in his Brother's Blood; and his firſt Action was the Murder of his Uncle *Amulius*, for which none could ever find a ſatisfactory Excuſe: And then, it was very difficult to ſuppoſe theſe *Heroes* to have taken Voyages.

Beſides, theſe two Eſtabliſhments were made before the Deſtruction of the States which preceeded them, and were the Cauſe of their Ruin. The Kingdom of *Alba* flouriſh'd during the Reign of the two firſt *Roman Kings*, but was eraſed by the Third: And *Monarchy* was extirpated by *Brutus*, and his Succeſſors in the *Conſulſhip*. It was of dangerous Conſequence, to inſtil this Notion into the Subjects of *Auguſtus*, and to put the People upon thinking, that this Prince had ruined the *Commonwealth*, and baniſhed their *Liberty*. The *Truth* of *Hiſtory* furniſhed him with a Thought more favourable to his Deſign; ſince in Reality *Cicero* and *Tacitus* do both inform us, "That "before this Prince made the leaſt Shew of "what he was about to do, there was no *Com-* "*monwealth* in being. All the Vigour of the "*Empire* was ſpent, the Laws were invalid, "the *Romans* were nothing elſe but the Dregs "of a State; and in ſhort, there was nothing "left of *Rome* but bare Walls, which were

"not

a not able to last much longer." Thus *Augustus* destroyed nothing, he only re-established a tottering State. This is what the * Poet is to prove, a great Empire ruin'd, of which his *Hero* was in no Fault; and this very Empire more gloriously re-established by the Virtue, and the good Conduct of the *Hero*.

In the *Roman History*, *Virgil* did not meet with a Prince, who could with any Probability keep up the Character of his chief Personage; he was obliged to look out for one somewhere else. *Homer* had this Advantage, that the *Heroes* of his *Fables* were *Greeks*, and that his own Country was the Theatre whereon most of the Fabulous Actions were transacted: So that he had Liberty enough to accommodate himself to the Manners and Religion of those for whom he wrote.

But the *Genius* and *Skill* of the *Latin Poet* helped him to that which *Fortune* denied him. He took † *Horace*'s Advice, and had Recourse to a *Hero* of the *Iliad*: And that he might make this Stranger conform to the Religion of the *Romans*, he has feign'd, that the *Hero* came thither to bring into *Italy* all the Cere-

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* Iliaci cineres & Flamma extrema meorum, Testor in occasu vestro, nec tela, nec ullas Vitavisse vices Danaum, & si fata, fuissent, Ut caderem, meruisse manu. *Virg. 2. Æneid.*

† Rectius Iliaci Carmen deducis in actus, Quam si præferres ignota indictaque primus. *Poet.*

monies,

monies, and to settle these Gods there, which ever since they have observ'd and ador'd. He has very luckily compleated this Conformity in * the Customs and Manners by making the *Trojans* and *Romans* but one People. And he as well as *Homer* has caused that his Illustrious *Heroes* should be the Fathers of his Auditors; but with this Advantage, that he himself makes the Application of it to his Readers, with an equal Measure of *Wit* and *Applause*.

Æneas is his chief Personage, *Turnus* is *Æneas*'s Rival, and in *Mezentius* one may observe the Cruelty of a Tyrant, who is at Enmity with both Gods and Men.

To conclude: The Arrival of *Æneas* into *Italy*, was not invented by the Poet, but handed down by Tradition. † *Cicero*, who wrote before *Virgil*, speaks thereof in his Speech against *Verres* upon the account of the City of *Segesta*. Its Inhabitants gave out that 'twas built by *Æneas*, when, in his Voyage to *Italy*, he staid for some time on the Coast of *Sicily*.

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* Sermonem Ausonii patrium moresq; tenebunt. *Æneid.* 12.

† Segesta est oppidum pervetus in Siciliâ, quod ab Æneâ fugiente à Trojâ, atque in hæc loca veniente, conditum esse demonstrant. *Cicer. in Verrem*, iv.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Horace's *Thoughts of the* Epick Fable.

'TIS time now to join *Ariſtotle* and *Horace* to *Homer* and *Virgil*, and to ſee whether the *Thoughts* and *Precepts* of our two *Maſters* about the *Nature of the Epick Fable* agree with the *Practice* of our two *Poets*. We will begin with *Horace*.

As for the Word *Fable* there is no Difficulty in it; he gives it to the * *Dramatick*, he gives it to the *Epick Poem*, and in plain Terms calls the † *Iliad a Fable*. The Buſineſs is to know what he means by this Word, and what in his Opinion the *Epick Fable is*.

If it be granted that this kind of *Fable* is of the ſame Nature with thoſe of *Æſop*, as we juſt now obſerved: Then we cannot ſay that an *Epopéa* is the *Panegyrick of a Hero*; of whom is rehearſed ſome illuſtrious Action or other; nor that the *Epick Fable* is only the Diſpoſition of the different Parts of that

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* Neve minor quinto, neu ſit productior actu Fabula. *Hor. Poet.*

† Fabula quâ Paridis narratur propter amorem Græcia Barbariæ lento colliſa duello. *Epiſt. ad Loll.*

Action,

Action, and of the ſeveral *Fictions* with which 'tis garniſhed.

Three Things may clear up this Difficulty: The *firſt* is the Choice and Impoſition of the Names, which are given to the Perſonages of the *Fable*: The *ſecond* is the Deſign which the Poet has of teaching Morality under an Allegory: And the *third* is the Virtue and Excellency of the chief Perſonage.

The *Firſt* is moſt deciſive: For if the Action be feigned, and the *Fable* prepared before the Poet has ſo much as thought of the Name he is to give to his chief Perſonage; without doubt he does not undertake the *Elogy* of any particular Man. But we do not find that *Horace* has concerned himſelf in the Buſineſs of impoſing Names: Therefore we refer this to the following Chapter, where we ſhall enquire into the Opinion of *Ariſtotle*.

The Point about Morality is expreſsly in *Horace*. This Critick is entirely for the way I propoſed. He ſays * "That *Homer* lays "down admirable Inſtructions for the Con-"duct of Humane Life, and herein prefers "the *Iliad* and the *Odyſſeis* to the Writings "of the moſt excellent Philoſophers." This is ſelf-evident, and having ſaid as much already, we wave ſaying any more about it:

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* Qui quid ſit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non; Plenius ac melius Chryſippo, & Crantore dicit. *Ibid.*

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The Reader may conſult his Epiſtle to *Lollius*.

"But what ſignifies it (may ſome one ſay) "if *Homer* had a Mind to lay down Inſtruc- "tions of Morality? This does not hinder, "but he might have made Choice of a *Hero* "whom he might have praiſed, and this *Elogy* "rightly managed might be a *Fable*. He was "willing then to praiſe *Achilles* and *Ulyſſes* "as *Xenophon* did his *Cyrus*." Is not this plainly the Deſign of *Virgil*? "And if *Ho-* "*mer* was leſs ſucceſsful, ought we not to "pardon the Imperfection of theſe firſt Ages, "which did not furniſh him with thoſe great "Idea's of Vertue, and thoſe perfect *Heroes* "which After-ages did produce"?

The *Hero* of *Virgil* is indeed a true *Hero* in *Morality* as well as *Poetry*; and repreſents to Kings a compleat Model of all the Vertues which conſpire to make a great Prince. This might have given that *Idea of the Epick Fable*, which we are now examining. For the *Æneid* is better read and underſtood than the *Iliad*. And Men are eaſily perſwaded, that the Deſign of theſe leſs known Pieces is the ſame with that which they are ſo well acquainted with. Beſides, this Judgment is backed by that noble *Idea* Men commonly conceive of the Valour of *Achilles*, and of the conſummated Prudence of *Ulyſſes*. Theſe are almoſt the two only Things which the generality of the World are acquainted with in the *Greek Poems*: Which may have induced them

to

to believe that the *Fables of Homer* are the *Panegyricks of* Achilles *and* Ulyſſes.

But if *Horace*, of whom we now ſpeak, had been of this Mind; and if he had believed, that the Deſign of an *Epick Poem* ſhould be to eſtabliſh the Merit of a *Hero*, and to propoſe him to others as a Model of Perfection; it neceſſarily follows, that either this great Critick was not well acquainted with conſiderable Defects in the *Heroes* of *Homer*, or elſe that he did not think *Homer* was a good Pattern to imitate.

Yet we ſee he knew the one, and believed the other. He knew no Vertue in *Achilles*, nor any Action that deſerved Praiſe. On the contrary, he ſays, "That in all the *Iliad*, "both in the *Grecians* * *Camp*, and in the "City of *Troy*, there was nothing to be ſeen "but Sedition, Treachery, Villany, Luſt, and "Paſſion": And he never commends *Achilles*, neither for his *Valour*, nor for his killing *Hector*, nor for any thing elſe he did againſt the *Trojans*.

Yet 'tis evident what an Eſteem he has for *Homer*; and that he carped at no Faults of his but † Peccadilloes. He would have every

* Seditione, dolis, ſcelere, atq; libidine & irâ, Iliacos intra muros peccatur & extra. *Ibid.*

† Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus. Verum opere in longo fas eſt obrepere ſomnum. *Hor. Poet.*

one,

one, that has a Mind to be a *Poet*, * have *Homer* before him Night and Day: And he propoſes the *Achilles* of *Homer* with all the Vices, and all the Defects he imputes to him, as a great Exemplar for others to follow. † He would have him be cholerick, inexorable, one who knows nothing of Juſtice, but has all his Reaſon at his Sword's Point.

'Tis true, to theſe Qualities he has joined *Vigilancy* and *Zeal* to carry on an Enterprize. But theſe Qualities being in their own Nature indifferent, have nothing that is good, but in Perſons duly accompliſhed as was *Scipio*. In wicked Perſons they are pernicious Vices, as in *Catiline*, who made no other uſe of them but to oppreſs his Country. 'Tis then in this laſt Senſe that *Horace* aſcribes them to *Achilles*, ſince he would have him be repreſented, as unjuſt and paſſionate.

In ‡ *Ulyſſes* he did diſcover an Example of Vertue: But ſince, in Truth, he does equally commend *Homer*, for giving us in his two Poems an Example of Vertue, and an Example

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* Vos exemplaria Græca Nocturna verſate manu, verſate diurna. *Ibid.*

† Scriptor honoratum ſi fortè reponis Achillem; Impiger, Iracundus, iners, inexorabilis, acer, *&c. Ibid.*

‡ Rurſus quid virtus & quid ſapientia poſſit, Utile propoſuit nobis exemplar Ulyſſes. *Ep. ad Loll.*

of

of Vice, should we not conclude, that the good or bad Qualities of the chief Personages, are not at all necessary nor essential to the *Epick Fable*; and that *Horace* never thought the *Epopéa* was an *Elogy* of an *Hero*?

That which the *Iliad* and the *Odysseis* have in common, is, that each of them is a Moral Instruction disguised under the Allegories of an Action. This is what *Horace* discovers in them; and by Consequence each of them, in the Opinion of this Critick, is a *Fable*, and such a one as we described it.

CHAP. XIII.

Aristotle's *Thoughts of the* Epick Fable.

WHAT we have said concerning the *Fable*, is still more manifest, in the Method and Order which *Aristotle* prescribes for the preparation of the Ground-work of an *Epick Action*. He does not bid us to search at first in *History* for some great Action, and some *Heroical* Person: But on the contrary, * he bids us to make a *general* Action which

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* Τούτους δὲ λόγους καὶ τοὺς πεποιημένους δεῖ καὶ αὐτὸν ποιοῦντα ἐκτίθεσθαι καθόλου. Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, ἤδη ἐπιθέντα τὰ ὀνόματα ἐπισοδιοῦν.

has

has nothing in it particular; to impose Names on the Persons after this first *Fiction*, and afterwards to form the *Episodes*.

For the better conceiving of his Mind, we must take notice what he means by a *general*, what by a *particular Action*. * "There is "this difference (says he) between a *Poet* and "an *Historian*, that the One writes barely "Matter of Fact, the Other lays down Things "just as they ought to have been. For this "Reason, *Poetry* is more serious and more "philosophical than *History*; because *Poetry* "tells us of *general* Things, and *History* re- "[illegible] "is that which could probably or necessarily "ought to have been said or done; and is "that to which the *Poet* ought to have a spe- "cial regard, when he imposes the Names on "his Personages. A *singular* Thing is that "which *Alcibiades*, for Instance, has either "done or suffered."

* Τοῦτο διαφέρει τοῦ ἱστορικοῦ τὸ γενόμενα λέγειν, οἷα ἂν γένοιντο. Διὸ καὶ φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν· ἡ μὲν γὰρ ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἡ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει. ἔστι δὲ καθόλου μὲν τῷ ποίῳ τὰ ποῖα συμβαίνει λέγειν, ἢ πράττειν κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς, ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, οἷς στοχάζεται ἡ ποίησις ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθεμένη. Τὸ δὲ καθ' ἕκαστον, τί Ἀλκιβιάδης ἔπραξεν, ἢ τί ἔπαθεν. Poet. c. 9.

The

The *Poetical Action* then is neither *singular* nor *historical*, but *general* and *allegorical*: 'Tis not what *Alcibiades* has done, but 'tis in general what any one else ought to have done upon the like Occasion.

'Tis a material Point to take notice, that a Thing must be done after one way or other, for its being either absolutely good, or for its being only probable, no matter, whether it be good or bad. *Xenophon* has feigned the Actions of his *Cyrus* in the first way; and so have all the Poets, who in imitation of him have undertaken to describe the Actions of a great Prince *panegyrically*. On the other hand, the *Hecuba* of *Seneca* should not have made such fine Reflections upon the Destruction of *Troy*, and the Death of *Priam*. Not but these Reflections in themselves are very just and useful; but only 'tis not probable, that a Woman lying under such a weight of Afflictions, should have such Thoughts, as were only becoming the Tranquillity of a great Philosopher, who had no manner of Interest in the *History* of these ancient Times.

'Tis in this last Sense, that *Aristotle* orders Poets to feign their Actions such, as they either probably or necessarily ought to have been. If there still remains any doubt what he means by this Expression, 'tis very easie to give an entire Solution of it. One need only consider the Instance of an Action that is just, and feigned regularly by the greatest of all the Poets: 'Tis that of the *Iliad*. Without doubt

he

he knew that the Action of *Achilles*, made Choice of by *Homer*, * is the Anger of this *Hero*, so pernicious to the *Greeks*, and not to the *Trojans*. We will not so much as suppose, that this great Philosopher ever thought, that the Extravagancies of a Man, who sacrifices his Friends and his Country to his own Revenge, was an Action any ways commendable, vertuous, or worthy the imitation of Princes. Certainly it had been more for the Honour of *Homer*'s Country, if he had sung of the War and the taking of *Troy*. And yet, † *Aristotle* does not only not blame him for foregoing such a glorious Subject, and making Choice of a more defective Theme: But he says that herein he has done something that is Divine.

He is then perfectly of the same Mind with *Horace*, who would have *Achilles* represented as cholerick, passionate, and unjust; just as *Homer* has made him. But that wherein *Aristotle* is more instructive than *Horace*, is his Method of giving Names to the Personages, that are introduced in a Poem. For how

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* Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος οὐλομένην. Iliad. i. Iratus Graiis quantum nocuisset Achilles! *Horat.*

† Διὸ ὥσπερ εἴπομεν, ἤδη καὶ ταύτῃ θεσπέσιος ἂν φανείη Ὅμηρος παρὰ τοὺς ἄλλους τῷ μηδὲ τὸν πόλεμον ἐπιχειρῆσαι ποιεῖν ὅλον, νὺν δὲ ἓν μέρος ἀπολαβών, &c. Poet. c. 23.

could

could one prepare the Ground-work of a particular Action of some illustrious *Hero*, that is not feigned; when one does not so much as know whether the *Hero* be *Achilles*, *Æneas*, *Ulysses*, *Diomedes*, or any other? And yet this is what *Aristotle* orders in the Composition of the *Epick Fable*, when he says, *that one should not give Names to Personages till after the Action is invented.*

One should indeed do that just before the forming of the *Episodes*: For if those, whose Names we borrow, have done any known Actions; the best way is to make use of them, and accommodate these real Circumstances to the *Ground-work* of the *Fable*, and to the Design of the Poet; to fill the *Episodes* with them; and to draw from them all the Advantages possible according to the Rules of Art. This Management renders the feign'd Action more probable, and may likewise make it look like true History. Besides, *Aristotle* had said, that the Poet in giving particular Names to Persons, which at first he made general, * should take special Care to make his Fiction probable.

This Precept is capable of another Meaning, which does not at all contradict what has been said, but rather confirms the Doctrine which I proposed: 'Tis this, *viz.* "That when you

* Οὗ ςοχάζεται ἡ ποίησις ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθεμένη. C. 9.

"have

" have feigned an Action, if it be mild and " moderate, you muſt not repreſent the chief " Perſonage thereof under the Name of *A-* " *chilles*, *Tydeus*, *Medea*, or any other whoſe " paſſionate Tempers are well known."

In this Doctrine, we ſhall with *Ariſtotle* meet with three ſorts of Actions which the Poets make uſe of. In the firſt, the *Things* and the *Names* of the Perſons are *ſingular* and *true*, and not feigned or invented by the Poet. The * *Satyriſts* make uſe of this ſort. In the *ſecond*, both the *Things* and the *Names* are *feigned* and *invented* by the Poet; and this is the Practice of *Comedians*. We have laid down an Inſtance thereof in the *Fable* we made uſe of under the Names of *Orontes*, *Pridamant*, and *Clitander*. In the *third* ſort, the *Things* are invented, but the *Names* are not. They are noted either by *Hiſtory*, or by ſome *Tradition* or other. This is manifeſt in the *Fable* we propoſed under the Names of *Robert Earl of Artois*, and *Ralph Count of Neſle*. We might ſay the ſame of the *Iliad*, the *Odyſſeis*, and the *Æneid*. This ſort of Action is proper for *Tragedy*, and the *Epopéa*.

Nor need we feign Inſtances to prove theſe Things, or ſeek for them in *Greece* and old *Italy*; ſince we have enough of them nearer home, in the *Satyrs*, the *Comedies*, and the

* Secuit Lucilius Urbem, Te Lupe, te Muti.

Tra-

Tragedies, which are daily to be seen in the World.

This Doctrine of *Aristotle* is so important, that it deserves to be consulted in the Original. After he had informed us that the *Poetical* Action is not *singular*, but *general* and *universal*; and after he had explained what he means by these Terms, as we observed at the beginning of this Chapter, he then goes on after this manner:

* "This in *Comedy* is very manifest, For "after the Poet has prepared his *Fable*, upon "what is *probable*, he then gives his Actors "what Names he pleases: And he does not "as the *Satyrists*, who speak only of *particular* Things. But in *Tragedy* they make use "of Names ready made to their Hands. This

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* Ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς Κωμῳδίας ἤδη τοῦτο δῆλον γέγονε. Συςήσαντες γὰρ τὸ μῦθον διὰ τῶν εἰκότων, οὕτω τὰ τυχόντα ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθέασι καὶ οὐκ ὥσπερ οἱ ἰαμβοποιοὶ περὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον ποιοῦσιν. Ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς τραγῳδίας διὰ τὸ γενομένων ὀνομάτων ἀντέχονται. αἴτιον δ' ὅτι πιθανὸν ὅτι τὸ δυνατόν· τὰ μὲν οὖν γενόμενα οὔπω πιστεύομεν εἶναι δυνατά· τὰ δὲ γενόμενα φανερὸν ὅτι δυνατά· εἰ γὰρ ἦν ἐγένετο ἂν οὐκ ἂν ἦν ἀδύνατα. ἔνια μὲν οὖν καὶ ἐν ταῖς Τραγῳδίαις ἐνίαις, ἓν μὲν ἢ δύο διὰ γνωρίμων ἐστὶν ὀνομάτων, τὰ δ' ἄλλα πεποιημένα· ἔνιαις δ' οὐθέν ἐστιν οἷον ἐν τῷ Ἀγάθωνος ΑΝΘΕΙ· ὁμοίως γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ τά τε πράγματα καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα πεποίηται, καὶ οὐδὲν ἧττον εὐφραίνει. Po. c. 9.

" makes

" makes us more readily believe the Thing to
" be *possible*; for Things that have never yet
" been done, we are not obliged to think *pos-*
" *sible*: But what has been already done, is
" without all Dispute *possible*; since it would
" never have been done, had it been impossi-
" ble. Yet in some *Tragedies*, there is but
" one or two known Names, and all the rest
" are feigned. Nay, in some others there is
" not one known Name, as in the *Tragedy of*
" *Agathon*, call'd *The* FLOWER, where all
" the *Names*, as well as *Things*, are feigned
" and invented. And yet it came off with
" Applause."

In favour of our Subject 'tis, that we cite what *Aristotle* says in this Passage, concerning the *Tragick Fable*. Nor is this a wresting of the Text, since this great Master lays it down as his first * Precept in the *Epopéa*, *That we ought to prepare the Fable thereof as for Tragedy.*

'Tis to be observ'd, that to make the thing *probable*; and to perswade Men of its *Possibility*, from its having been done already, *Aristotle* orders us to put the Fable not under a *known Action*, but only under *known Names*. This makes good what we before alledged, *viz.*

* Δεῖ τὰς μύθους καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαις συνιστάναι P. c. 23.

* *That the Poet ſhould think of making his Action probable, when he gives Names to the Actors.* This is the Practice of thoſe who make *Hiſtories* of their own Inventions. The better to perſwade the World of the Truth of what they ſay, they name the *Places* and the *Perſons*; and the more theſe Names are known, the more Credit they meet with. *Homer* has acquitted himſelf ſo very handſomely in this Matter, that the Art he had of *feigning* the beſt of any Man in the World, is one of the Commendations he deſerved from the Mouth of † *Ariſtotle* himſelf.

We conclude then that *Homer* in his *Practice*, and *Ariſtotle* in his *Precepts*, are exactly of the ſame Mind; that *Homer* had no other Deſign but to form the Manners of his Country-men, by propoſing to them, as *Horace* ſays, what was profitable or unprofitable, what was honourable or diſhonourable: But that he did not undertake to rehearſe any particular Action of *Achilles* or *Ulyſſes*. He made his *Fable*, and laid the Deſign of his Poems, without ſo much as thinking on theſe Princes; and afterwards, he did them the Honour to beſtow their Names on the *Heroes* he had feign'd.

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* Κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον ἕ ποιεῖσθαι ἡ Ποίησις ὀνόματα ἐπιτιθεμένη P. c. 9.

† Διδάσκει ὅ μάλιστα Ὅμηρος καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ψευδῆ λέγειν ὡς δεῖ. Poet. c. 24.

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In other *Hiſtories* of the *Trojan War* we do not indeed read of this Quarrel between *Achilles* and *Agamemnon*, which *Homer* has taken for the Subject-Matter of his *Iliad*: And what is no leſs conſiderable is, that this very Deſign and Action which the Poet has form'd under the Name of *Achilles* at the *Siege of Troy*, might with the ſame *Probability* have went under the Name of *Tydeus*, *Capaneus*, or any other at the *Siege of Thebes*. One might have made *Adraſtus* the General, and given him ſome occaſion of exaſperating the cholerick Nature of *Capaneus*. He, by withdrawing into his Tent only for a few Days, might have given the *Thebans* ſome Advantages over his Party. Afterwards one might have made this furious Perſon return to his Duty: And then fighting with the reſt, he might have gain'd the Victory to his own Side, and reveng'd in one ſingle Day, the Affront and Loſs they had ſuffer'd the three or four Days before: And this is all we contend for in the *Iliad*.

The ſame might be ſaid of *Ulyſſes*. All the Adventures we read of him in the *Odyſſeis*, might with altogether as much *Probability* have been rehears'd under the Name of any other Prince returning from an Expedition. For the better Proof of which, we need only caſt an Eye upon the *Platform* which *Ariſtotle* himſelf has left us thereof: And 'tis as follows.

* " A Man is abſent from his own home " for ſeveral Years. *Neptune* perſecutes him, " deſtroys all his Retinue, and only he him- " ſelf eſcapes. In the mean time his Family " is in diſorder, his Eſtate is made away with " by his Wife's Suitors, and his Son is plot- " ted againſt. But at laſt, after many Storms " at Sea, he returns home, diſcovers himſelf " to his Friends, conceals himſelf from others, " ſets all Things to rights again, and puts his " Enemies to Death. This (concludes *Ari-* " *ſtotle*) is all that is proper, the *Epiſodes* " make up the reſt." This, in my Mind, gives us abſolutely ſuch an Idea of a *Fable* as I propoſed: And in this Model *Ulyſſes* ſeems to have as little to do as any other.

But after the *Model* is pitch'd upon, the *Action* invented, and the *Names* given, then if thoſe whoſe Names are borrow'd have done any known Actions, the Poet ought to make uſe of them, and to accommodate theſe true Circumſtances to his own Deſign. With theſe he muſt fill his *Epiſodes*, and from theſe he

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* Ἀποδημῶν ὁς πολλὰ, καὶ παρατηρούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος καὶ μόνος ὢν ὁς· ἔπειτα τὰ οἴκοι οὕτως ἐχόντων ὥστε τὰ χρήματα ὑπὸ μνηστήρων ἀναλίσκεσθαι καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἐπιβεβουλεῦσθαι αὐτῷ ἀφικνεῖται χειμασθεὶς καὶ ἀναγνωρίσας τινὰς ἄλλοις ἐπιθήκων, αὐτὸς μὲν ἐσώθη, τοὺς δὲ ἐχθροὺς διέφθειρε. Τὸ μὲν οὖν εἶδος τοῦτο, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα ἐπεισόδια. Ariſtot. Poet. c. 17.

ſhould

ſhould draw all the Advantages poſſible, according to the Rules of Art. Thus *Ariſtotle* gives no Orders for making the *Epiſodes* till the Names are pitch'd upon.

He therefore tranſgreſſes the *Precepts* of *Ariſtotle*, and the *Practice* of *Homer*, and ſpoils the Eſſence of the *Epick Fable* in particular, as well as of other *Fables* in general, who begins by looking for his *Heroe* in ſome Hiſtory or other, and undertakes to rehearſe a particular Action this *Heroe* has done, as we ſee in *Silius Italicus*, *Lucan*, *Statius*, and in the Authors of the Adventures of *Hercules* and *Theſeus*, which *Ariſtotle* takes notice of. They did not make any *general* or *univerſal Platform* without Names, but made it altogether *ſingular*. For how could any one write like *Silius*, without thinking on the particular Action and Name of *Hannibal*? Call him as much as you will, in your *Platform*, a *Certain Man*, yet ſtill this *Certain Man* is determinately *Hannibal*. You are ſo far from taking away his Name, that after you have once nam'd him, you afterwards uſe a Pronoun or ſome other Word which ſignifies him, inſtead of the Term *Hannibal*, which you are loath to repeat. Thus *Ariſtotle* does not order the Names to be taken away (which can never be done) but he only orders to feign an Action without Names, to make it at firſt univerſal, as he inſtances in the *Odyſſeis* and *Iphigenia*.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Real Actions, the Recitals whereof are Fables.

THere is a great deal of Difference between *Fiction* and a downright *Lye*; and between a Thing's being *Probable*, and its being *no more than Probable*. The Poet is order'd to *feign*, but no body desires him to tell *Lyes*. He is told, that he is oblig'd to *Probability*, and not to *Truth*; but no one says, that the *Probability* he is oblig'd to by his Art is incompatible with the *Truth*. The *Truth* of an Action does not give him the Name of Poet, nor does it rob him of it: And, as *Aristotle* says, * an Author is as much a Poet, though the *Incidents* he relates did really happen: Because whatsoever has been done, is capable of all the *Probability*, and all the *Possibility*, which the Art requires, and of being such as ought to be *feign'd*.

This makes so little an Alteration in the Nature of Things, that even the Author of a

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* Καὶ ἄρα συμβῆ γενόμενα ποιεῖν εἶδὲν ἧττον ποιητής ἐστιν. Τῶν γὰρ γενομένων ἔνια οὐδὲν κωλύει τοιαῦτα εἶναι οἷα ἂν εἰκὸς γένεσθαι, καὶ δυνατὰ γένεσθαι, καὶ καθ' ὁ ἐκεῖνον αὐτῆς ποιητής ἐστιν. Arist. Poet c. 9.

Fable

Fable is not always ſatisfied with making a bare Narration of the Action he feigns, but ſometimes ſets it off with all the *Truth* 'tis capable of. Anciently this was very common; and I might produce the whole *Hiſtory* of the *Old* * *Teſtament*, all the *Hiſtorical Truths* whereof were ſo many *Fables*, or *Parables* divinely invented, which repreſent Allegorically to us the Doctrine and the Truths which the Author of them has ſince diſcovered to us.

But without concerning our ſelves with *Sacred Things*, we know what a Father did to perſwade his Children to Unity. He might have only told them, that a Man very eager of breaking all the Arrows in his Quiver, ſtriv'd to ſnap them all in pieces at once; but after many fruitleſs Trials, he was forc'd to part them; and then breaks them one after another without the leaſt Trouble. He might have related a Thing that was falſe, and only probable. But he did ſomething more: He put a bundle of Rods, tied cloſe together, into the Hands of each of his Children, and bid them ſee if they could break them: They uſed their utmoſt Endeavour, but to little Purpoſe. Then he gave them the Rods one by one, and the weakeſt of theſe young Creatures broke them eaſily. The *Truth* of this Matter of

* Omnia in figura contingebant iis. *Paul. Epiſt. ad Corinth.*

Fact does not at all deſtroy the *Nature* of the *Fable*.

Sertorius made uſe of the ſame Artifice to his Soldiers. He order'd the Tails of a couple of Horſes to be pull'd off before them. At laſt came a weak old Fellow, and did it with eaſe, pulling off the Hairs one after another; whilſt a luſty Fellow had haraſs'd himſelf to no Purpoſe, becauſe he took up too many Hairs at a time. When a *Recital* is made of this *true Action*, one tells as exact a *Fable*, as when one mentions the *Fable* of the *Iliad*, that of *Æſop*'s *Dogs*, or any other of that Author, wherein is neither *Truth* nor *Probability*.

'Tis true this Action of *Sertorius* was feign'd before it was true, and this General did begin to form his *Fable* by the Moral, which is, (as I ſaid) the common way of forming *Fables*. But here I add, that the *True Action* may precede the *Fable*. The Example of *Engravers* and *Statuaries* will make us eaſily conceive how this revers'd Order, ſo contrary to the Rules of Art, may notwithſtanding be applied thereto without deſtroying them.

Art teaches the *Engraver* to form his Deſign firſt, to fancy the Poſtures, and the Proportions he would give his Perſonages; and afterwards to look out for Materials that are proper to receive that which he has imagin'd. If notwithſtanding he lights upon ſome choice Material, ſuch as *Agat*, for inſtance, whoſe Figure, Colours, and Veins, cannot be ſuited

to

to all that he has a Mind it ſhould; he then regulates his Deſign and Fancy according to his Matter. But yet he is not of the Opinion, that theſe lucky Hits and particular Accidents condemn the Juſtneſs of his Art, or make this a ſtanding Rule for him to go by, viz. *That he muſt begin to look out for Materials, and then form his Deſign according to what the Diſpoſition of his Materials may ſuggeſt to his Fancy.*

In this then, as in a great many other Things, * *Poetry* is like *Painting*. The Poet is frequently oblig'd to ſuit himſelf to the Diſpoſitions of his Matter: Which is found to be true, eſpecially in the Compoſition of the *Epiſodes*, which are made after the General Perſonages are ſingulariz'd by the Impoſition of the Names. It may likewiſe ſo happen, that ſome Perſon in Hiſtory may furniſh an Author with fine Fancies, and as exact a Moral as that which *Homer* teaches. And in this Caſe, the Poet does not at all tranſgreſs his Art, though he ſhould apply all his Moral to the Action. But notwithſtanding this rare and lucky Hit, the common Rules loſe nothing of their Exactneſs or Authority.

We ſtill maintain, "That the *Epick Poem* "is a *Fable*; that is, not the *Rhearſal* of the "*Action* of ſome one *Heroe*, in order to form "Men's Manners by his Example; but, on

* Ut Pictura Poeſis erit. *Hor. Poet.*

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* Ut Pictura Poeſis erit. *Hor. Poet.*

" the contrary, a Diſcourſe invented to form " the Manners by the *Recital* of a *feign'd* " *Action*, and deſcrib'd at Pleaſure under the " borrow'd Name of ſome Illuſtrious Perſon " or other, that is made Choice of, after the " *Platform* of the Action, that is aſcrib'd to " him, is laid."

CHAP. XV.

Of the feign'd Actions, the Recitals whereof are Hiſtorical.

AS there are *True* Actions, the *Recitals* whereof are exact and regular *Fables*; ſo on the other hand, there are *feign'd* Actions, the *Recitals* whereof are *Hiſtorical*. Nothing is to be eſteem'd Fabulous in them, but a downright Falſhood, and that has as little to do with the *Fable*, as the Truth of Hiſtory. The Reaſon of this is, that the moſt eſſential part of the *Fable*, and that which muſt indiſpenſably ſerve for its Foundation, is the *Truth* ſignified. 'Tis eaſie to explain our ſelves by thoſe very Examples we have already made uſe of; we need only cut off ſome neceſſary Circumſtances of them in order to illuſtrate the Doctrine we would add here.

If the *Dogs* that were ſet to keep the *Sheep*, and whoſe Falling out gave the *Wolf* an opportunity of ſeizing upon ſome of them; if they, I ſay, follow the *Wolf* before they end their Quarrel; and if upon overtaking him, they are as fierce againſt one another, as againſt their Common Enemy: In this Caſe, though the *Wolf* quit his Prey, fly for it, or though he die of the Wounds they give him; yet this *Fiction* will no longer ſignifie, *That Concord re-eſtabliſhes what Diſcord deſtroys*; ſince the Calamity would have been ended, though the Diſcord ſtill continued.

In like manner, if *Achilles* being provok'd at the Death of *Patroclus*, had ſet upon and kill'd *Hector* without being reconcil'd to *Agamemnon*; the Omiſſion of this *Incident*, would have ſpoil'd the *Fable*.

We add farther, that if *Achilles* had been leſs inexorable, and had ſubmitted to the Offers of *Agamemnon* before the Death of *Patroclus*; and if this Quarrel had not coſt him the Life of his Friend, the *Fable* would have been ſpoil'd: For ſince the Quarrel would have been only prejudicial to *Agamemnon*, this Example would have ſhew'd us, in the Perſon of *Achilles*, that one might Quarrel, and be at Variance, without loſing any thing: Which is quite contrary to the *Moral* of the Poet.

We ſhould deprive the *Odyſſeis* of its very Soul, and ſpoil its *Fable*, ſhould we retrench from it the Diſorders which the Suitors of *Penelope* rais'd in the Iſle of *Ithaca*, during the

the Abſence of *Ulyſſes*: Becauſe this Poem would no longer inform us of the miſchievous Effects which the Abſence of a Commander, a King, or a Father of a Family, does produce.

Laſtly, Take away from the *Æneid*, the Choice which the Gods made of *Æneas* for the re-eſtabliſhing of the Empire; his Divine Arms; the Care *Jupiter* took to engage *Mezentius* in the Quarrel, where he was to be puniſh'd for his Impieties; and the Terrors with which this God affrights *Turnus*: And the *Æneid* will no longer inform the *Romans* in favour of *Auguſtus*, *That the Founders of Empires, ſuch as this Prince was, were the* Choſen *of Heaven, that Divine Providence protects them from all manner of Violence, and ſeverely puniſhes the Impious, who oppoſe their Deſigns.*

All theſe *Recitals* want their *Emphaſis*, and that Inſtruction, which is the moſt eſſential Part of the *Fable*. When a Poet goes this way to work, he does not make ſuch *Epick Poems* as *Ariſtotle* and *Horace* preſcribes Rules for, nor ſuch as *Homer* and *Virgil* has left us ſuch exact Patterns of. It is not much Matter whether theſe *Recitals* are of true Things, ſuch as thoſe of *Lucan*, and *Silius Italicus*; or whether they are feign'd and drawn from *Fables*, ſuch as thoſe of *Statius* in his two Poems. He relates a *Fiction*, they *Hiſtory*: But all three write more like *Hiſtorians* than *Epick Poets*.

'Tis

'Tis true, they have all a Mixture of *Divinities* and *Machines*, which carry a *Fabulous* and *Poetical* Air in them: But ſince theſe very Additions are likewiſe in true *Fables*, they will never make theſe *Recitals* to be of the Nature of an *Epopéa*; becauſe theſe *Fables* conſiſt only in the Additions and Decorations of the Action. Now the *Epick Fable* is none of all this; 'tis on the contrary the Soul of a Poem, and the *Ground-work* upon which all the reſt is built. And this *Ground-work* is to be prepar'd before one ſo much as think of the Decorations, which make no part of the Eſſence of the *Fable*. The being adorn'd and loaded with Animate Things, will never make an Animal, but there muſt be a Soul added to it: And though all the Earth were cover'd and embelliſh'd with an infinite number of Trees, and pierc'd very deep with their Roots, yet it will never paſs for a Tree it ſelf.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Vicious Multiplication of Fables.

Ariſtotle beſtows large Commendations on *Homer* for the *Simplicity* of his Deſign, becauſe he has included in one ſingle Part all that happen'd in the *Trojan War*. And to him

him he oppoſes the Ignorance of certain Poets, who imagin'd that the *Unity* of the *Fable*, or of the *Action*, was well enough preſerv'd by the *Unity* of the *Heroe*, and who compos'd their *Theſeid's*, *Heraclid's*, and ſuch like Poems, in each of which they heap'd up every thing that happen'd to their principal Perſonage. The Inſtances of theſe Defects which *Ariſtotle* blames, and would have us avoid, are very inſtructive. Theſe Poems are loſt to us: But *Statius* has ſomething very like it.

His *Achilleid* is a Draught of all the Adventures which the Poets have feign'd under the Name of *Achilles* *. "O Goddeſs (ſays "this Poet) ſing of the magnanimous Son of "*Æacus*, that has made *Jove* himſelf trem-"ble, and was deny'd Admittance into Hea-"ven, from whence he dedu'd his *Origin*. "*Homer* has render'd his Actions very fa-"mous; but he has omitted a great many "more than he has mention'd: For my part, "I will not omit any thing. 'Tis this *Heroe* "at his *full Length* which I deſcribe." Here is a noble Deſign, and *Ariſtotle* falls ſhort of what he propoſes.

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* Magnanimum Æacidem, formidatamque Tonanti Progeniem, & patrio veritam ſuccedere cœlo, Diva refer. Quanquam aſta Viri multum inclyta cantu Mæonio, ſed plura vacant. Nos ire per omnem, ſic amor eſt, Heroëa.

All

All this cannot be conſider'd, but as an *Hiſtorical Recital*, and without the leaſt Glimpſe of a *Fable*. Nor can I repreſent the Idea I have of this Deſign better, than by comparing it with the *Fables of Æſop*. I have already compar'd the *Iliad* with one of theſe *Fables*: And ſure I may take the ſame liberty in a Poem that is leſs Regular; and make a Compariſon between the *Achilleid*, which comprehends ſeveral Actions under one and the ſame Name, and ſeveral *Fables* which likewiſe go under one Name. *Homer* and *Virgil* diverted themſelves with their Poems of the *Gnat*, and of the *Battel between the Frogs and the Mice*: Nor ſhall I ſtoop lower, when, upon the like occaſion, I ſhall enlarge my ſelf as far as the Deſign of *Statius*, and the Neceſſity of this Doctrine require me.

Let us ſuppoſe then an Author, who is as well vers'd in the *Fables of Æſop*, as *Statius* was in the *Epick Fable*; and who has read the *Batrachomyomachia*, as well as *Statius* has the *Iliad*. He ſhall have diſcover'd in this *Battel between the Mice and the Frogs*, the great Commendations which *Homer* beſtows on the Valour of one of the *Heroes* in this *Fable*, upon *Meridarpax* for inſtance; whoſe Bravery made *Jove* and all the Gods wonder no leſs, than that of *Capaneus* in the *Thebaid*. And as *Statius* has read of ſeveral Actions of *Achilles*, which are not in the *Iliad*; this Author likewiſe ſhall have read of many Adventures attributed to the *Mouſe*, which are not in the *Batrachomyomachia* of *Homer*. He

He ſhall know what paſſed between the *City-Mouſe* and the *Country-Mouſe*; in order to teach us, *That a little Eſtate enjoy'd quietly is better than a copious one, that expoſes us to continual Fears.*

He ſhall know that a *Lion* having ſpared the Life of a *Mouſe*, was afterwards ſaved by this very *Mouſe*, who gnaw'd aſunder the Toils in which he was caught; whereby he might inform us, *That the good Offices we do to the moſt Infirm and Ignoble, are not always loſt.*

He ſhall know the Story of the *Mountains*, which after great Groans, and much ado, were deliver'd of a *Mouſe*; *like thoſe who promiſe much, but perform little.*

He ſhall have read in the *Battel between the Cats and the Mice*, that the *Mice* being defeated and put to flight, thoſe amongſt 'em, who had put Horns upon their Heads as a diſtinguiſhing Note of their being the *Commanders*, could not get into their Holes again, and ſo were all cut off: Becauſe in the like Diſorders, *the Chief Leaders, and Men of Note, do commonly pay Sawce for all.*

And upon theſe Diſcoveries, when he has conceiv'd the Idea of a Piece more ſurprizing than the *Batrachomyomachia*, or than any other particular *Fable of Æſop*, he ſhall undertake a Poem of all the *Fables* of the *Mouſe*: As *Statius* undertook one about every thing that Story or the Poets ever ſaid of *Achilles*. He might begin after the ſame manner, as *Statius* did his *Achilleid*:

"In-

" Inſpire me, O my Muſe, what I ought to
" ſay concerning the Magnanimous *Meridar-*
" *pax*, which *Jove* himſelf cannot look upon
" without trembling. *Homer* indeed has ce-
" lebrated ſome of his Actions in his Poem;
" but there are a great many ſtill untouch'd;
" and I am reſolved to omit nothing that my
" *Heroe* has done."

He, as well as *Achilles*, had a *Mortal* for his Sire, to wit, the Redoubted *Artepibulus*, and a Mother far above his Rank and Quality, no leſs than a lofty *Mountain*. His Birth is foretold by the Oracles, and the People flocking together from all Parts to be Witneſſes of this miraculous Labour, beheld *Meridarpax* creep out of his Mother's Belly, with ſo much Surprize and Delight, that their joyful Shouts and loud Laughter carried the News thereof to the Gods.

In the War his Aſſociates maintain'd againſt the *Amazonians of the Lakes*, he ſignaliz'd himſelf in the Death of *Phyſignathus*. He would have utterly deſtroy'd all his Enemies, had not the Gods put a ſtop to his Deſigns.

To refreſh himſelf after the Fatigues of this War, he was for taking the Air in ſome Country-Seat or other. But by the way he is ſurprized by a furious *Lion*, who is juſt ready to tear him to Pieces: But *Meridarpax* was no leſs Eloquent than Stout. The *Lion* admir'd his Parts, and let him go.

He

He was welcom'd in the Country by an old Friend of his Sire's. This *Villager* thought of making him a delicate Repaſt with his Country-Fare: But theſe old, dry, and unſavoury Morſels would not down with our nice Stranger. Whereupon bepitying the ſorry Life of his Friend, he invites him to a more pleaſant one, and prevail'd upon him to jog along with him.

They were ſcarce got half-way to their Journey's End, but they heard a moſt terrible Noiſe. *Meridarpax* perceiv'd 'twas the *Lion*'s Roar which before had ſpar'd his Life. He made that way, and in ſhort found him ſo fetter'd in the Nooſe, that he expected nothing elſe but Death: The *Mouſe* freed him from that fear, by gnawing aſunder ſeveral Knots; and put the Priſoner in a Capacity of freeing himſelf from the reſt.

Meridarpax re-joyns his *Country-Friend*, conducts him to Town, and receives him very ſplendidly in a Pantry well furniſh'd. This new *Citizen* was bleſſing himſelf at his happy Change; when on the ſudden in ſteps the Houſekeeper, and at her Heels one of the moſt formidable Enemies theſe two Gueſts had. The *Domeſtick* betook himſelf preſently to his Cittadel: But the poor *Stranger*, ſeiz'd with Fear, and every Limb about him in an Ague, ſees himſelf a long time expos'd to the Claws of a mercileſs Enemy. In ſhort he eſcap'd; and without minding the good Cheer, as ſoon as the Danger was over, and he came to himſelf,

ſelf, he takes his *Congé* of his Hoſt, and tells him, *That he preferr'd his quiet Poverty to all that Plenty which was ſo attended with Frights and Fears.*

Meridarpax ſtomachs this Affront, calls together a great many of his Allies, and prevails ſo effectually upon them, that they enter into a Confederacy with him, and offer to ſerve him in the War. He, the better to maintain his Grandour, and make himſelf more Conſpicuous than all the reſt, claps two great Horns on his Forehead. At the firſt opening of the Pantry he had a great deal of Succeſs againſt ſome of the young Rangers, who firſt came in. But no ſooner had their ſqueaking call'd in their Sires and their Dams, and the Wawling of a great many others at a Diſtance, gave notice of a new Reinforcement, that was ready to pour in upon the Aſſailants, but they preſently thought of a ſpeedy Retreat. The reſt with eaſe ſlunk into their Holes, and none left upon the ſpot but *Meridarpax* embaraſs'd with the Enſigns of his Grandour, which made the Avenues too ſtrait for him to eſcape at. One of his Party bid him lay aſide his Regalities, but he had ſcarce time to reply, *That he had rather die like a King, and make his Exit glorioufly.*

A Poem made of theſe Stories joyn'd together, and which we might compare with one of the *Fables of Æſop* or the *Batrachomyomachia*, is very much like the Idea I have of the *Theſeid*, the *Heraclid*, the *Achilleid*, and

other

other ſuch like Poems, when compar'd with thoſe of *Virgil* and *Homer*.

Ariſtotle was in the right, when he call'd a certain little *Iliad* the whole *Trojan War* ſqueez'd into the compaſs of one ſingle Poem. This *Iliad* indeed was very ſmall, ſince it was all contain'd in a very narrow Compaſs. It was not at all like the *Iliad* of *Homer*, a ſmall part of which fill'd ſo many Books. We may ſay as much of the *Achilles* of *Statius*, who is comprehended at his full Length within the Compaſs of *twelve Books*. And the *Achilles* of *Homer* is ſo vaſt, that a few Days of his Anger and Paſſion have taken up *four and twenty Books* compleatly. According to the old * *Adage* it muſt needs follow, that this *Lion* of *Homer* was of a prodigious Size, ſince ſo large a Table could contain no more than one ſingle Paw, which had been the Deſtruction of ſo many *Heroes*. And on the other ſide, that the *Lion* of *Statius* was but of a very ſmall Size, ſince all his Parts could be comprehended and included in a Table leſs by half than that of *Homer*'s.

You ſee then the ill Effects of *Polymythia*, or a *Vicious Multiplication of Fables*. The *Fable* of the *Dogs* and the *Wolf* demonſtrates how beautiful and regular the *Iliad* is; and the *Narration* of the Adventures of the *Mouſe* ſhews the contrary in the *Achilleid*. If my

* Ex ungue Leonem.

two

two Parallels are of equal juſtneſs, the Difference that appears to be between the *Achilles* of *Homer* and that of *Statius* ought to be attributed to nothing elſe but the different Conduct of theſe two Authors.

There is ſtill another way of *irregularly multiplying Fables*, without making a Rehearſal of the *Heroe*'s whole Life: And that is, by mixing with the *main Action* other *foreign Actions*, which have no manner of Relation thereto. This belongs to the *Unity of the Action*, and the Art of making the *Epiſodes*; of which we ſhall ſpeak in the next Book.

The *Poem* of *Ovid*'s *Metamorphoſes* is of another kind. If (as I have already laid down the Idea I conceiv'd of the *Achilleid* of *Statius*, of the *Heraclid*, of the *Theſeid*, and of other ſuch like Pieces of the Ancient Poets) I had a Mind likewiſe to preſent the World with an Example of *Æſop*'s *Fables* compar'd with *Ovid*'s *Metamorphoſes*; I ſhould be forced to put all the *Fables of Æſop* into one Body: Becauſe *Ovid* is not contented to rehearſe all that ever happen'd either to *Achilles*, or to *Hercules*, or to *Theſeus*, or to any other ſingle Perſonage; but he makes a *Recital* of all that ever happen'd to all the Perſons of the *Poetical Fables*. This *Recital* is by no means an *Epick Poem*, but a Collection of all the *Fables* that were ever writ in Verſe, with as much Connexion and Union, as the Compiler of ſo many Incidents could deviſe.

And

And yet I do not see how any one can condemn this Design, and tax its Author with Ignorance: Provided none pretend that he design'd to make an *Epopéa*, nor compare it to the Poems of *Homer* and *Virgil*, as *Statius* has done his *Achilleid* and *Thebaid*.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Regular Multiplication of Fables.

ALtho' we have been speaking so much against the *Multiplication of Fables*, yet one cannot absolutely condemn it. Our Poets have got several *Fables* in each of their Poems, and *Horace* commends *Homer* for it. Nay *Aristotle* himself forbids it in such a slight way, as might be easily evaded. * He finds Fault with those Poets who were for reducing the *Unity* of the *Fable* into the *Unity* of the *Heroe*; because One Man may have perform'd several Adventures, which 'tis impossible to reduce under any *One* and *simple* Head. This reducing of all Things to *Unity* and *Simpli-*

* Μῦθος δὲ ἐστὶν εἷς οὐχ ὥσπερ τινὲς οἴονται ἐὰν περὶ ἕνα ᾖ· πολλὰ γὰρ καὶ ἄπειρα τῷ ἑνὶ συμβαίνει ἐξ ὧν ἐνίων οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ἕν, &c. Poet. c. 8.

city

city is what * *Horace* likewiſe makes his firſt Rule.

According to theſe Rules then, it will be allowable to make uſe of ſeveral *Fables*; or (to ſpeak more correctly) of ſeveral Incidents which may be divided into ſeveral *Fables*; provided they are ſo order'd, that the *Unity* of the *Fable* be not ſpoil'd thereby. This Liberty is ſtill greater in the *Epick Poem*, becauſe 'tis of a larger Extent than ordinary Poems, and ought to be *Entire* and *Compleat*.

I will explain my ſelf more diſtinctly by the Practice of our Poets.

No doubt but one might make four diſtinct *Fables* out of theſe four following Inſtructions.

1. *Diviſion between thoſe of the ſame Party expoſes them to the Fury of their Enemies.*

2. *Conceal your Weakneſs, and you will be dreaded as much, as if you had none of theſe Imperfections, which they know nothing of.*

3. *When your Strength is only feign'd, and founded only in the Opinion of others; never venture ſo far, as if your Strength was real.*

4. *The more you agree together, the leſs Hurt will your Enemies do you.*

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* Denique ſit quodvis ſimplex duntaxat, & unum. *Hor. Poet.*

'Tis

'Tis plain, I ſay, that each of theſe particular *Maxims*, might ſerve for the *Ground-work* of a *Fiction*, and one might make four diſtinct *Fables* out of them. May not a Man therefore put all theſe into one ſingle *Epopéa*? No: Our Maſters forbid that, unleſs he could make one *ſingle Fable* out of them all.

But they do not at all forbid it, if the Poet has ſo much Skill as to unite all into one Body, as Members and Parts, each of which taken aſunder would be imperfect; and if he joins them ſo, as that this Conjunction ſhall be no hinderance at all to the *Unity* and the *Regular Simplicity* of the *Fable*. This is what *Homer* has done with ſuch Succeſs in the Compoſition of the *Iliad*.

1. *The Diviſion between* Achilles *and his Allies tended to the ruin of their Deſigns.* 2. Patroclus *comes to their Relief in the Armour of this* Heroe, *and* Hector *retreats.* 3. *But this young Man puſhing the Advantage, which his Diſguiſe gave him, too far, ventures to engage with* Hector *himſelf; but not being Maſter of* Achilles's *Strength (whom he only repreſented in outward appearance) he is killed, and by this means leaves the* Grecian *Affairs in the ſame Diſorder, which he in that Diſguiſe came to free them from.* 4. Achilles *provoked at the Death of his Friend, is reconciled, and revenges his Loſs by the Death of* Hector. Theſe various *Incidents* being thus *United* together, do not make different *Actions* and *Fables*, but are only the uncom-

compleat, and unfinished Parts of one and the same *Action* and *Fable*, which alone can only be said to be *Compleat* and *Entire*: And all these *Maxims* of the *Moral*, are easily reduc'd into these two Parts, which in my Opinion cannot be separated without enervating the Force of both. The two Parts are these, * *That a right Understanding is the Preservation, and Discord the Destruction of States.*

Tho' then our Poets have made use of two Parts in their Poems, each of which might have serv'd for a *Fable*, as we have observ'd: Yet this *Multiplication* cannot be call'd a *vicious* and *irregular Polymythia*, contrary to the necessary *Unity* and *Simplicity* of the *Fable*; but it gives the *Fable* another *Qualification*, altogether as necessary and as regular, namely *its Perfection and finishing Stroke.*

There are *Fables* which naturally contain in them a great many Parts, each of which might make an exact *Fable*: And there are likewise *Actions* of the very same Nature. The subject Matter of the *Odysseis* is of this kind; for *Homer* being willing to instruct a Prince and his Subjects, could not do it without *multiplying Instructions*; and this Prince's Travels into Countries quite different from each other are likewise different *Actions*. This

* Concordiâ res parvæ crescunt: Discordiâ magnæ dilabuntur. *Salust. de Bell. Jug.*

Multiplication of Instructions and *Incidents* is extremely approv'd of by *Horace*. He commends the * Adventures of *Antiphates*, *Polypheme*, *Charybdis*, *Circe*, the *Sirens* and others, stiling them *the Miracles of the Odysseis*.

One might likewise *multiply the Fable* another way, by mixing with it some other *Fable* which should not be a part of the principal One, but only a *Species* of it. This might be done by applying to some Point that is chiefly specified the *Moral Instruction*, which the Action contains in general. *Homer* has left us an Example of this in the *Fable of Vulcan*, at the End of his first Book of the *Iliad*.

The *general Instruction* is, *That Discord is a Prejudice of the Affairs of them who quarrel*: And this Story of *Vulcan* applies it, to the Injury which the falling out of Parents does their Children. "*Jupiter* and *Juno* "Quarrel, their Son *Vulcan* is for perswading "his Mother to submit to her Lord and Husband, because he was most Powerful. You "know (says he) what befel me for endeavouring once to protect you from the Rage "of *Jupiter*. He took me by the Heels, and "threw me headlong from his Battlements, "and I carry the Marks of it still about me."

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* Ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat, Antiphaten, Scyllamque, & cum Cyclope Charybdim. *Hor. Poet.*

This

This *Fable* is quite diſtinct from the *Body* of the *main Action*; for the Quarrel between *Jupiter* and *Juno*, which coſt *Vulcan* ſo dear, had nothing to do with the *Grecian* Affairs: 'Tis likewiſe compris'd in five Lines.

CHAP. XVIII.

The Concluſion of the Firſt Book.

THE *Unity* of the *Fable*, and the *Regular* or *Vicious Multiplication* that may be made thereof, depends in a great Meaſure upon the *Unity of the Action*, and upon the *Epiſodes*; ſo we ſhall ſpeak more thereof in another Place: But in this and many other Points, the *Examen* of our Authors, and thoſe particular Inſtructions one might deſcend to for an exact Underſtanding of this Doctrine, would never be at an end. And tho' I ſhould fill ſeveral Volumes with what I have to ſay about it, yet I ſhould ſtill leave enough to employ the *Imagination*, the *Genius*, and the *Judgment* of both *Criticks* and *Poets*, which *Art* without *Nature* never brings to Perfection. Nor are we to fancy that *Nature* alone, and the Advantages of a happy *Genius*, can make us capable of paſſing a Judgment upon the Ancient Poets; unleſs *Art* and *Study* acquaint

us with the Taſte and Manners of their Auditors, and of the Times they liv'd in.

The Reliſh which all Antiquity, both *Sacred* and *Profane*, *Greek* and *Barbarian*, had for *Fables*, *Parables*, and *Allegories* (which are one and the ſame in this Place) gave the Ancient Poets a great deal more Liberty than the Moderns have; and make Things in *Homer* paſs for Beauties, which would look but ill in a Piece of Modern Poetry. This likewiſe expoſes our Ancient Poet to ſuch Cenſures, as bewray our Ignorance oftner than his Faults. The * Cuſtom of that Time was to conceal their Myſteries from Vulgar View, and not to explain their Allegories. Men of Learning made it a particular Study to diſcover theſe myſterious Meanings, and this Penetration of Thought made a conſiderable Part of their Learning. Our Age, which in other Things pretends to ſo much Light and Curioſity, is very negligent of theſe ſorts of Knowledge, ſince they no longer agree with our Cuſtoms.

Tis perhaps this very Neglect, which conceals from our Eyes the greateſt Beauties of *Homer*, and which inſtead of his Skill, only

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* Vobis datum eſt noſſe myſteria, cæteris in Parabolis tantum. Qui poteſt capere capiat.

Sapientiam omnium antiquorum exquiret ſapiens, & in verſutias Parabolarum ſimul introibit, occulta proverbiorum exquiret, & in abſconditis Parabolarum converſabitur. *Eccl.* c. 39.

ſhews

ſhews us a very mean and groſs Outſide, which hinders us from judging favourably of his Spirit and Conduct. However he had Reaſon to make uſe of this way, and to accommodate himſelf to the * Mode of his Age. He knew well enough, that thoſe, who did not penetrate him would admire him as much as others; becauſe every one was perſwaded that what appear'd to the Eye of the World, was in effect nothing elſe but the Shell, which contained the profitable and pleaſant Parts of his Work.

Virgil was a great deal harder put to it, becauſe the *Romans* of his Time did not ſo frequently uſe *Fables* and *Allegories*. *Cicero* did not treat of *Philoſophy* as *Plato* and *Socrates* did, upon whom they father *Æſop*'s *Fables*. And St. † *Jerom* takes notice that *Parables* were in greateſt Vogue in the *Eaſt*. So that when *Virgil* was minded to ſhroud his Inſtructions and Doctrine under *Allegories*, he could not be contented with ſuch a plain outſide as *Homer*'s was, which gravels thoſe who cannot penetrate it, and who are ignorant that he ſpeaks Figuratively. But he has ſo com-

* Poetæ officium in eo poſitum ut quæ vera ſunt in alias ſpecies obliquis figurationibus cum decore aliquo converſa traducat. *Lactant. Inſtit. l. 1.*

† Familiare eſt Syris & maxime Palæſtinis ad omnem ſermonem ſuum Parabolas jungere. *Hieron. in Matth.*

poſed his *Outſide*, and his *Fictions*, that thoſe very Perſons who can go no farther, may, without ſeeking for any thing elſe, be very well ſatisfied with what they find there.

This Method is wholly conformable to our Way, and very much to our Palates. But I fancy, the Satisfaction we ſo eaſily find in theſe *External Fictions* alone, does us ſome Prejudice. The more we fix there, the leſs ſearch do we make into the Bottom and Truth of Things. This makes us perhaps Equivocate upon the Word *Fable*, which we apply ſo differently to the *Epopta*, and to the *Fictions of Æſop*.

This Prepoſſeſſion of Mind does *Homer* a great deal of Diskindneſs; for we are often willing to find ſuch Vertues and good Manners there, which are not there, and which we ſuppoſe ought regularly to have been there: Becauſe we are ſo little acquainted with his way of teaching *Morality*.

From hence it comes to paſs that we meet with ſo great Obſcurities in the Precepts of *Ariſtotle* and *Horace*, who commend *Homer* ſo much for that, which we are ſo little acquainted with, eſpecially if we examine it according to the Ideas of Perfection, which we generally form to our ſelves. By this means we ſhall be ſubject to great Confuſions and many Contradictions. Before ever then we paſs a Judgment upon theſe Things, and upon *Homer*, who is the Author and firſt Model of them, 'tis requiſite we rightly comprehend

hend his *Allegories*, and penetrate into the *Moral* and *Physical Truths* of the *Fable*, with which his Poems are so full.

As little Insight as I have in these Matters; yet I fancy, I have said enough to explain what a *Fable* is, and to demonstrate the Idea I have of the *Nature* of the *Epick Poem*.

The End of the First Book.

Monsieur *Bossu*'s Treatise OF THE EPICK POEM.

BOOK II.

Concerning the subject Matter *of the* Epick Poem, *or concerning the* Action.

CHAP. I.

What the subject Matter *of the* Epick Poem *is.*

THE *Matter* of a *Poem* is the Subject which the *Poet* undertakes, proposes, and works upon. So that the *Moral*, and the Instructions which are the *End* of the *Epopéa*, are not the *Matter* of it. These Things are left by *Poets* in

in their Allegorical and Figurative Obſcurity. They only give us notice in the Beginning of their Poems, that they ſing ſome Action or another: *The Revenge of* Achilles, *the Return of* Ulyſſes, *and the Arrival of* Æneas *into* Italy. Our Maſters ſay juſt the ſame thing. * *Ariſtotle* informs us that the Poet *Imitates an Action*: And † *Horace* in more expreſs Terms tells us, *That the Actions are the ſubject Matter of the Epopéa.*

But this *Action* is the Action of ſome Perſon: And our Authors expreſsly ſay as much. ‡ *Ariſtotle* ſays that the Poets, who imitate, Imitate the Perſons that Act. *Horace* ſays, that the Imitated Actions are the Actions of Kings, and Generals of an Army. And our *Poets* do not propoſe ſimply, a *Revenge*, a *Return*, or an *Eſtabliſhment*: But they ſay further, that 'tis || *Achilles*, who is Reveng'd; * *Ulyſſes*, who Returns; and † *Æneas*, that

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* Μίμησις πράξεως. Poet. c. 6. and elſewhere.

† Res geſtæ Regumq; Ducumque, & triſtia bella, Quo ſcribi poſſent numero monſtravit Homerus. *Hor. Poet.*

‡ Μιμοῦνται οἱ μιμούμενοι πράττοντας. Ar. Poet. c. 2.

|| Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ, Πηληϊάδεω, Ἀχιλῆος Οὐλομένην. Iliad. 1.

* Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε Μοῦσα πολύτροπον, &c. Odyſſ. 1.

† Arma Virumque cano, Troiæ qui primus ab oris Italiam, fato profugus Laviniaque venit Littora. *Æneid.* 1.

goes to be Establish'd. Therefore, both the *Actions* and the *Personages* are the *subject Matter* of the *Epopéa*.

But suppose we should consider them apart, and ask whether the *Action*, or the *Persons*, is the Chief and Principal *Matter* of the Poem: It is plain by what has been said in the former Book, that the *Action* is not made for the *Hero*, since that ought to be feign'd and invented independently from him, and before the *Poet* thought of using his Name; and that on the other hand, the *Hero* is only design'd for the *Action*: And that the Names of *Achilles*, *Ulysses*, and *Æneas* are only borrow'd to represent the Personages which the *Poet* feign'd in general. The Nature of the *Fable* will not admit us to doubt hereof; since all the Actions that are there rehears'd under the Names of a *Dog*, a *Wolf*, a *Lion*, a *Man*, and the like, are not design'd to inform us of the Nature of these Animals to which they are applied; or to tell us of some Adventure that happen'd to them: For the Author of a Fable does not mind any such thing. These *Personages* on the contrary are only design'd to sustain the *Action* he has invented. It is therefore true in this Sense, that the * *Action* alone is the *subject Matter* of the *Epopéa*, or at least, that 'tis a great deal more so than the Persons; since

* Ἔστι τε μίμησις Πράξεως, καὶ διὰ τούτην μάλιστα τῶν Πραττόντων. Arist. Poet. c. 6.

that

that in its own Nature it ſo, and the *Perſons* are only ſo by virtue of the Action.

So likewiſe have thoſe been condemn'd, who have taken the *Heroes* for the *ſubject Matter* of their Poems. *Ariſtotle* finds Fault with the Poets, who under the name of the *Theſeid*, and the *Heraclid*, have writ the Lives of *Theſeus* and *Hercules* in Verſe. *Statius* is likewiſe to blame in his *Achilleid*, becauſe he does not ſing of *Achilles* who did ſuch or ſuch an Action, as *Homer* and *Virgil* have done; but he ſings *Achilles* himſelf, and this *Achilles* at his full length.

Tis true *Virgil* in his *Æneid*, and *Homer* in his *Odyſſeis* call their Poem by their *Heroe's* Name: But this is no more than what is ordinary in *Fables*. Thus the Titles run, the *Wolf* and the *Lamb*, the *Lion* and the *Mouſe*, &c. and yet no one imagines, that theſe Fables were written to inform us of the Nature of theſe Animals, or to tell us what a certain *Wolf* has done or ſaid. The ſame Judgment ought to be made of the *Epick Fables*, and the Application thereof is eaſie.

This Doctrine may eaſily render us capable of judging what extent is allowable to the *Matter* of a Poem; of what *Incidents* it is compos'd; and whether 'tis lawful to inſert ſuch as belong not to the main Matter.

Since then the *Action* is the *Matter* of a *Fable*, it is plain that whatever Incidents are neceſſary to the *Fable*, and make up a part of it, are likewiſe neceſſary to the Action, and are

Parts

Parts of the *Epick Matter*, none of which ought to be omitted: Such, for inſtance, are the Quarrel of the *Dogs*; and that of *Agamemnon* and *Achilles*: The Havock which the *Wolf* made among the *Sheep*; and the Slaughter which *Hector* made in the Confederate Army: The Re-union of the *Dogs* with each other; and that of the *Grecian* Princes: And laſtly, the Re-ſettlement and Victory which was conſequent to this Re-union in each of theſe *Fables*. Thus all Things being adjuſted, you ſee the Fable, and the whole *Action*, with which the Poem ought to conclude. If leſs had been ſaid about it, it had not been enough.

But can an Author put nothing into his Poem, but what is purely the Matter of it? Or has he not the Liberty of inſerting what he pleaſes, and of tacking to it, as * *Horace* expreſſes himſelf, ſome Pieces of rich and gay Stuff, that have nothing to do with the Groundwork? This is another vicious Extreme, into which we ſhall never fall, if we follow the Dictates of right Reaſon, the Practice of good Poets, and the Rules of the beſt Maſters. They permit us on the one hand to inſert ſome Incident or another that is neceſſary to clear up a part of the *Action*, altho' this Incident make up no part of the Fable nor the *Action*; and

* Purpureus latè qui ſplendeat unus & alter
Aſſuitur pannus. *Hor. Poet.*

tho'

tho' of it self it be not the ſubject Matter of the *Epopéa*: And on the other hand they do not approve of the Recital of an Incident that has not one of theſe two Conditions, *viz.* Such a one as is neither the Matter of the *Epopéa*, nor neceſſary to illuſtrate any part of the *Action*.

Examples and Authority will juſtifie this Doctrine, and make it more intelligible.

If in the Fable we mention'd, *Æſop* had related that the *Wolf* ranging one Day in the Foreſt prick'd his Foot with a Thorn, of which after a great deal of Pain he was at laſt cur'd; doubtleſs he would have quite ſpoil'd his Fable: And *Homer* too had ſpoil'd his, if he had made an ample Narration of ſome Adventure that had happen'd to *Hector*, which had no manner of dependance on his Deſign. They would have been more conſiderably to blame, had they inſerted any Incident, which had not happen'd to theſe chief Perſonages, but which they only ſaw or heard. On the other ſide *Æſop* had ſaid ſomething to the Purpoſe, if, to amplifie his Fable, he had related that the *Wolf* was wounded in the Foot, and being not quite cur'd, the Pain or the Weakneſs of that Part hinder'd his Running, and expos'd him a Prey to the *Dogs*. So *Homer* has very regularly related, that *Ulyſſes* had formerly been wounded in the Leg, as he was hunting on the top of *Parnaſſus*: For this Wound ſerv'd to diſcover this *Hero*, and this Diſcovery is part of the *Action*, and of the *Matter* of the Poem.

An

An *Historian*, that undertakes to write of one single Action, as the War of *Catiline*, or the Reign of a King, as *Sallust* has done that of *Jugurtha*; has not for his *subject Matter* the Wars and Actions which went before, or happen'd after. Yet he may mention some, which may serve as Instances in the Deliberations; or for the maintaining of some Interests; or upon any other Occasion that is necessary to his main Subject. A *Poet* has the same Privileges, and the same Reasons on his side: Our two have practis'd accordingly, and have the Approbation of *Aristotle* himself. For he does not blame *Homer* for making the Recital we mention'd; and yet he says that the Wound of *Ulysses* is not the Matter of the Poem to which it is apply'd. His Words are these. * *When* Homer *compos'd his* Odysseis, *he did not make all the Adventures of* Ulysses *the Matter of his Poem; such as the Wound he receiv'd upon* Parnassus, *and the Folly he feign'd before the* Grecians: *Because, tho' one of these two Things happen'd, yet it cannot be said that the other ought necessarily, or probably to have happen'd as the Consequence of the former.*

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* Ὀδυσσειαν γὰρ ὁ ποιῶν οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἅπαντα ὅσα ἐυτῷ συνέβη· οἷον πληγῆναι μὲν ἐν τῷ Παρνασσῷ, μανῆναι δὲ προσποιήσασθαι ἐν τῷ ἀγερμῷ, ὧν οὐδὲν θατέρου γενομένου ἀναγκαῖον ἦν ἢ εἰκὸς θάτερον γενέσθαι. Arist. Poet. c. 8.

This

This Passage of *Aristotle* teaches us two Things. The first is, that every Thing we meet with in an *Epick Poem* is not the *Matter* of it; since this Wound of *Ulysses*, which *Aristotle* says is not the *Matter* of the *Odysseis*, is notwithstanding very largely described there. The second is, that the foreign Incidents, that are inserted in the Poem, should be so united and joyn'd to some other Incident, which is really the *subject Matter* of the Poem, that one might swear if one happen'd, the other must necessarily, or in all probability have happen'd as a Consequence of the former.

The * *Poet* has observ'd this himself in the Wound of *Ulysses*. The discovery thereof is a Consequence so probable, that this *Heroe* finding he was forc'd to let his Nurse wash his Feet, chose to let her do it in a dark Place, that so at least she might be kept from the Sight of it. The Birth and Education of *Camilla* is an Incident made use of after the very same way in the *Æneid*: It is not the *subject Matter* of the Poem, but 'tis necessary to clear up so surprizing a Miracle as was the Valour of that excellent *Virago*.

When an Adventure has not this Consequence, nor this necessary or probable Connexion with some part or another of the *Mat-*

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* Ποτὶ δὲ σκότον ἐτράπετ' ἄγχα. Αὐτίκα γὰρ χαθάθυμον ὀΐσατο μὴ ἐλαβοῦσα Οὐλὴν ἀμφράσσαιτο. Odyss. lib. 19.

ter

ter proper to the Poem; 'tis by no means to be inserted: And upon this account *Homer* has not said one Word of the counterfeit Folly of *Ulysses*. *Statius* with a great deal more Reason should never have meddled with the Story of *Hypsipyle*.

All the particular Incidents which compose the Action are called *Episodes*. We ought then to be well acquainted with the *Nature*, *Union*, and *Qualities* of them, if we would know what is the *Action* and the *Subject Matter* of the *Epick Poem*.

CHAP. II.

Episodes *consider'd in their Original.*

THE better to know what an *Episode* is, and to comprehend what *Aristotle* has said about it, we must look back for it in its first beginning, and in the Rise of *Tragedy*, whereby it first began. I speak of it here tho *Monsieur Hedelin* has formerly writ about it.

Tragedy at first was only a Song in honour of *Bacchus*, which was performed by several Persons (who made up the *Musical Chorus*) with dancing and playing upon Instruments.

Since

Since this was too tedious, and might fatigue the Singers, as well as diſguſt the Audience; they thought of dividing the Song of the *Chorus* into ſeveral Parts, and of making ſome kind of *Narrations* between theſe Intervals. At firſt one ſingle Perſon ſpoke them: Then they brought in two Speakers, becauſe Dialogues are more diverting: And at laſt they increas'd the Number to three, to give way for more Action. Thoſe who made theſe *Narrations* upon the Scene or Stage were call'd *Actors*. And what they ſaid being adventitious to the Song of the *Chorus*, theſe Narrations were no more than Ornaments added to a Ceremony, of which they were not a neceſſary Part: And for this Reaſon were they call'd *Epiſodes*.

Beſides, as they were only added to refreſh the *Chorus*, and their Aſſiſtants; it follows that the *Chorus* had ſung before, and were to ſing after them: So that theſe *Epiſodes* were always to be plac'd between the two Songs of the *Chorus*. Whatever was ſaid before the firſt, or after the laſt Song, was not look'd upon as an *Epiſode*: But theſe new Additions were made for Reaſons diſtinct from thoſe which were urg'd for introducing *that*. The Deſign of them was, either to welcome the Company, and prepare them for what was to be Acted; and this was call'd the *Prologue*: Or elſe to thank and take leave of them; which was call'd the *Exode* or *Epilogue*.

All

All this made up the four parts of *Quantity*, as * *Aristotle* terms it: viz. *The Prologue, the Episode, the Exode, and the Chorus. The Prologue is all that preceeds the first Entrance of the Chorus; the Episode is all that is between the Songs of the Chorus; the Exode is that which is said after the Chorus has done singing; the Chorus was the Company of those who sang the Praises of* Bacchus; *And at first that was the only Tragedy in being.*

As this Narration of the Actors was inserted in several Places, and made at several times: So one might consider it Entire, as one single *Episode* compos'd of several Parts; and one might likewise call each part an *Episode*. In this last Sense a *Tragedy* had several *Episodes*; and in the first it had but only one. These different *Episodes* of one and the same *Tragedy* might be deduc'd from as many different Subjects: Or be all taken from the same Subject, that was divided into as many Recitals or Incidents as the Poet had a Mind to allow Intervals for the *Chorus* to take Breath in. If

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† Καθὰ δὲ ποσὸν καὶ οἷς ἂν διαιροῖτο κεχωρισμένα, τάδε ἐστὶ Πρόλογος, Ἐπεισόδιον, Ἔξοδος, Χορικόν. Ἔστι Πρόλογος μὲν μέρος ὅλον Τραγῳδίας, τὸ πρὸ χορῦ παρόδου. Ἐπεισόδιον δὲ μέρος ὅλον Τραγῳδίας τὸ μεταξὺ ὅλων χορικῶν μέλων. Ἔξοδος δὲ μέρος ὅλον Τραγῳδίας μεθ' ὃ οὐκ ἔστι χορῦ μέλος. Aristot. Poet. c. 12.

we

we consider the first Institution of these foreign Pieces, there was not the least Necessity of deducing all of them from one and the same Subject. Three or four Recitals of different Actions, that had no Relation to one another, could refresh the Singers well enough, and keep the Audience from languishing, as much as if they had all been only different Parts of one and the same Action, very closely connected together.

But these foreign Beauties soon took off from the Lustre of those others which so charitably gave them Entertainment: And that which at first was only an Addition to *Tragedy*, afterwards became the principal Part of it. Then, they were consider'd as a Body, whose Members should not be Heterogeneous, and independant on one another. The best Poets made use of them thus, and they deduc'd their *Episodes* only from one single Action. This was so far establish'd in *Aristotle*'s Time, that he made a standing Rule of it. He says, that the most defective *Tragedies* are such, whose *Episodes* have no manner of Connexion. He calls them *Episodical*, that is to say, overcharg'd with *Episodes*: Because these lesser *Episodes* cannot make one single one, but of necessity remain in a vicious Multiplicity.

Actions, that were most simple, and had least of Intrigue, were most of all liable to this Irregularity, because having fewer Incidents, and fewer Parts than others, they afford so much the less *Matter*. A *Poet* of no great Con-

Conduct, very often quite spends himself at the first or second coming on of his Actors between the Songs of the *Chorus*: And then he finds himself oblig'd to seek out for other Actions to fill up the Intervals behind. Our first *French* Poets did so. They took to fill up each Act just as many different Actions of a *Heroe*, which had no manner of Connexion, save that they were done by one single Person. These Fables are *Episodical*, and such as *Aristotle* has condemn'd, as we hinted before. His Censure is in these Words: * *Of all the Fables and simple Actions that are, the Episodical are the most Imperfect. The Episodical Fable I call such a one, whose Episodes have no necessary nor probable Connexion.*

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* Τῶν δὲ ἁπλῶν μύθων καὶ πράξεων αἱ ἐπεισοδιώδεις εἰσὶ χείρεις. Λέγω δὲ ἐπεισοδιώδη μῦθον, ἐν ᾧ τὰ ἐπεισόδια μετ' ἄλληλα, οὔτ' εἰκὸς, οὔτ' ἀναγκη εἶναι. A. Poet. c. 9.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

An Explication of the foregoing Doctrine by an Instance.

AS for what has been said, you may consult what the Practice of the *Poets* was, when they compos'd the Works we have been speaking of. After the *Fable* was invented, and the *Names* impos'd on the Personages, the Author was to consider all the Circumstances of his Action, and what Parts were finest and most suitable to the Movements of the *Theatre*, and to his own Design; and then he was to make as many Parts of his Representation, as there were distinct Narrations between the Songs of the *Chorus*.

To give you a famous Instance of this, and such an Instance as is well known to the whole World, we will make use of *Seneca*'s *Oedipus*, without minding the several Absurdities that are therein.

Oedipus begs the Gods to tell him the Means of putting a stop to the Plague that then rag'd at *Thebes*: The Oracle returns him this Answer, *That the Death of King* Laius *his Predecessor must be reveng'd.* He makes enquiry after the Murderers, and finds that he was not only guilty of this Man's Death, but besides was the very Son of *Laius*, whom he had mur-

murder'd, and of *Jocasta* his Widow, whom he had marry'd. He punishes himself severely for it, and by this means restores the Health of his Country.

You see then this Famous *Fable*, and in Truth the most just, and the best invented, as to the *Moral*, and the *Theatral* Part, of any Antiquity can boast of.

The * *Grecians*, for whom it was compos'd, were extremely pleas'd to see the Crimes and the Misfortunes of Kings: And the Moral Instruction, that was most in Vogue at that time, was such a one as did beget in Men an Aversion to *Monarchy*, and a love to *Democracy*, which they call'd Liberty. What the *Poets* feign'd of *Oedipus* contain'd all these Things; and was very proper to prevent the Grandees from aspiring to Tyranny, and to inspire others with a Resolution never to endure it.

This Fable being thus conceiv'd has very naturally these five Parts. The first comprehends the Misfortunes of the People. The second is the Enquiry into the Cause and the Remedy of these Misfortunes. The third is the Discovery thereof. The fourth is the Effect of this Discovery, and the Performance of what the Gods requir'd, namely the punishing those Crimes, that had been the Cause of the Ills which the People suffer'd. And the fifth is

* Reges & exactos Tyrannos Densum humeris bibit aure Vulgus. *Hor.*

the

the Cure and Joy that ought to be the Conſequence of the Repentance and Puniſhment of *Oedipus*.

But this laſt Part was very improper for the *Theatre*. The calm and languiſhing Paſſions, of which the Spectators upon this occaſion were hardly capable, would have enervated and ſpoil'd the Beauty of thoſe violent Paſſions ſo proper to *Tragedy*, and with which the Audience were to be inſpir'd. The *Poet* then was not to make an exact *Epiſode* of this laſt Part. On the other hand, he has divided the ſecond Part into two, and has ſupply'd his five Acts in the following Method.

1. The Plague rag'd in the City of *Thebes*, and brought ſo many Miſeries and dreadful Deaths upon them, that King *Oedipus*, touch'd with the Misfortune of his Subjects, would freely have left the Kingdom; But he hopes for ſome Relief from the Oracle he has ſent to conſult, and attends its Anſwer.

2. *Creon* brings him the Anſwer, and informs him, That the Cauſe of the *Thebans* Misfortunes, is the Murder committed upon the Perſon of his Predeceſſor King *Laius*: And that the Remedy is the puniſhing of the Murderer. *Oedipus* ſets himſelf upon his Duty of puniſhing the Offence: And to diſcover who this Murderer was, whom no Body as yet knew, he orders *Tireſias* to be ſent for. This Prieſt began by a Sacrifice, but that made no diſcovery of the Thing in queſtion.

3. He

3. He then had recourse to more powerful Means. He calls up from the Shades below the Ghost of *Laius*, who discovers to him that King *Oedipus* is the Assassin that ought to be punished; and moreover, that this Prince, who thought himself Innocent, was at the same time guilty of Incest and Parricide. But *Oedipus*, inform'd of this only by *Creon*, and supposing he was born at *Corinth*, Son to King *Polybus* and Queen *Meropa*, is very confident of his own Innocence, and gives no Credit to the Report *Creon* made him. He is perswaded 'tis a Falshood invented to out him of the Kingdom, to which *Creon* was next Heir.

4. But at last he understands that he did kill *Laius*, and was his Son, and *Jocasta*'s, whom he had ignorantly married.

5. He punishes himself severely, plucks out his own Eyes, goes into Exile, and so restores Health and Quietness to his People.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the several Sorts of Episodes, *and what is meant by this* Term.

THE Word *Episode* passing from the *Theatre* to the *Epopéa*, did not change its Nature: All the Difference * *Aristotle* makes between them is, that the *Episodes* of *Tragedy* are shortest, and the *Episodes* in these great Poems are by much the longest. So slight a Difference should be no hinderance to our speaking of both after the same manner.

This Word, according to *Aristotle*, is capable of three distinct Meanings. The first arises from that Enumeration of all the Parts of *Tragedy*, which we mention'd. For if there are only four Parts, viz. *The Prologue, the Chorus, the Episode, and the Epilogue*; it follows, that the *Episode* in *Tragedy* is whatever does not make up the other three; and that if you substract those three, the *Episode* necessarily comprehends all that remains. And since in our Times they make *Tragedies* without either *Chorus*, *Prologue*, or *Epilogue*; this Term *Episode* signifies all the *Tragedy* which

* Ἐν μὲν οὖν τοῖς δράμασι τὰ ἐπεισόδια σύντομα, ἡ δὲ ἐποποιΐα τούτοις μηκύνεται Poet. cap. 17.

is made now-a-days. So likewiſe the *Epick Epiſode* will be the whole Poem. There is nothing to be ſubſtracted thence, but the *Propoſition* and the *Invocation*, which are inſtead of the *Prologue*. In this Senſe the *Epopéa* and *Tragedy* have each of them but one ſingle *Epiſode*, or rather, are nothing elſe but an *Epiſode*: And if the Parts and Incidents of which the Poet compoſes his Work have an ill Connexion together, then the Poem will be *Epiſodical* and defective, as we hinted before.

But as all that was ſung in *Tragedy* was, according to *Ariſtotle*'s Expreſſion, call'd the *Chorus* in the Singular Number; and yet its being in the Singular was no Reaſon why each Part (when it was divided into ſeveral) ſhould not be call'd the *Chorus* too; and ſo ſeveral *Chorus*'s be introduc'd: Juſt ſo in the *Epiſode*, each Incident, and each part of the Fable and the Action, is not only ſtil'd a part of the *Epiſode*, but even an *Entire Epiſode*. 'Tis in this Senſe that * *Ariſtotle* ſaid, the Madneſs of *Oreſtes*, and his Cure by Expiatory Sacrifices, were two *Epiſodes*. This Term taken in this Senſe ſignifies each part of the Action expreſs'd in the Model, and firſt Conſtitution of the Fable; ſuch as the Abſence and Travels of *Ulyſſes*, the Diſturbance of his Family, and his Preſence which re-adjuſted all Things.

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* Οἷον ἐν τῷ Ὀρέστῃ ἡ μανία δι' ἧς ἐλήφθη, καὶ ἡ σωτηρία διὰ τὴν καθάρσεως. Poet. cap. 17.

Ariſtotle

Ariſtotle tells us of a third Sort of *Epiſodes*, when he ſays, that whatever is comprehended and expreſs'd in the firſt Platform of the Fable is *Proper*, and the other Things are *Epiſodes*. * This is what he ſays juſt after he had propos'd the Model of the *Odyſſeis*. We muſt then in the *Odyſſeis* it ſelf examine what this third Sort of *Epiſode* is, the better to know wherein it differs from the ſecond. We ſhall ſee how the Incidents he calls *Proper*, are abſolutely neceſſary: And how thoſe, which he diſtinguiſhes by the Name of *Epiſodes*, are in one Senſe neceſſary and probable; and in another Senſe not at all neceſſary, but ſuch as the Poet had liberty to make uſe of, or not.

After *Homer* had laid the firſt Ground-work of the Fable, and prepar'd the Model, ſuch as we have obſerv'd it to be, it was not then at his Choice to make or not make *Ulyſſes* abſent from his Country. This Abſence was Eſſential: † *Ariſtotle* ſtiles and places it among thoſe Things that are proper to the Fable. But the Adventure of *Antiphates*, that of *Circe*, of the *Sirens*, of *Scylla*, of *Charybdis*, &c. he does not call ſuch. The Poet was left at his full Liberty to have made Choice of any other, as well as theſe Things. So that, they

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* Τὸ μὲν ἓν ἴδιον τοῦτο· τὰ δ' ἄλλα ἐπεισόδια. Ibid.

† Ἀποδημοῦντος πολὺν ἐπὶ χρόνον .... Τὸ μὲν ἴδιον τοῦτο. Ibid.

are only probable, and ſuch *Epiſodes* as are diſtinct from the main Action, to which in this Senſe they are neither proper nor neceſſary.

But now let us ſee in what Senſe they are neceſſary thereto. Since the Abſence of *Ulyſſes* was neceſſary, it follows, that not being at home, he muſt be ſomewhere elſe. Though then the Poet had his Liberty to make uſe of none of theſe particular Adventures we mention'd, and he made Choice of; yet had he not an abſolute Liberty of making uſe of none at all: But if he had omitted theſe, he had been neceſſarily oblig'd to ſubſtitute others in their Room; otherwiſe he would have left out part of the *Matter* contain'd in his Model, and his Poem would have been defective.

This laſt Senſe of the Word *Epiſode* is not ſo different from the ſecond as it ſeems at firſt Sight, ſince it ſtill informs us that an *Epiſode* is a neceſſary Part of the *Action*. The difference between them lies in this, that an *Epiſode* in the ſecond Senſe is the Foundation and Ground-work of the *Epiſode* in the third Senſe: And that this third Senſe adds to the ſecond the probable Circumſtances of Places, Princes, and People, where and among whom he was caſt by *Neptune*, and abode during his Abſence from *Ithaca*.

We muſt likewiſe take Notice, that in this third Senſe, the Incident which ſerves as a Foundation to an *Epiſode*, ought to be of ſome Extent and Compaſs, and that without this an eſſen-

eſſential Part of the Action and Fable is not an *Epiſode*. As in the Example of *Oedipus* which we propos'd; the Cure of the *Thebans* is a Part proper and eſſential to the Fable, and would be an *Epiſode* in the ſecond Senſe. But becauſe the Poet has not amplified this Incident by any Circumſtance, therefore 'tis not an *Epiſode* in the third Senſe: 'Tis only the Foundation of ſuch an *Epiſode*, which the Poet made no uſe of. This Obſervation makes it clear, that in Reality the firſt Platform of the Action contains only what is proper and neceſſary to the Fable, and has not any *Epiſode*; as *Ariſtotle* ſays of the Model he has given us of the *Odyſſeis*.

'Tis therefore in this third Senſe we are to underſtand the Precept of *Ariſtotle*, which orders us not to form the *Epiſodes* till after we have made Choice of the Names we would give our Perſonages. *Homer* could not have ſpoken of a Fleet and Navy, as he has, if inſtead of the Names of *Achilles*, *Agamemnon*, and the *Iliad*, he had made Choice of thoſe of *Capaneus*, *Adraſtus*, and the *Thebaid*, as he might have done without ſpoiling the Eſſence of the Fable.

If one ſhould form an *Epiſode*, whereof not only the Names and Circumſtances were not neceſſary, but whoſe very Ground-work and Foundation was not a part of the Action, that ſerves for the Subject-Matter of a Poem; then this *Epiſode* would have a ſorry Connexion, and would render the Fable *Epiſodical*. This

Irregularity is diſcernable, when one can ſo take away a whole *Epiſode*, without ſubſtituting any thing in its Room, that this Subſtraction ſhall make no *Vacuum*, nor Defect in the Poem. The Story of *Hypſipyle* inſerted in the *Thebaid*, is an Inſtance of theſe defective *Epiſodes*. If the whole Narration of this famous Matron were taken away, the Sequel of the main Action would be but ſo much the better; one ſhould not perceive that the Poet had forgot any thing, or wanted the leaſt Member of the Body of his Action.

But ſuppoſe any one ſhould ſay, "That if "theſe particular Incidents were natural and "neceſſary Members, it would thence follow, "that they would not be foreign, extraneous, "additional, and inſerted Pieces." To this I anſwer, that all this is true; but withal, that the Thing has retain'd its original and native Name, though it has quite loſt its Nature. *Ariſtotle*, who as well as others has retain'd this dubious Term, preſcribes the Rules of *Tragedy* under the Name of *Epiſode*. Therefore in this Treatiſe, wherein I only follow his Precepts, I am oblig'd to take every thing in his Senſe, and not ſpoil the Nature of the Things, which he explains, by a ſuperſtitious adhering to a Word that has chang'd its Nature ever ſince its firſt Riſe.

I will maintain then that the Word *Epiſode* in the *Epick Poem* does not ſignifie an extraneous foreign Piece, even in *Ariſtotle*'s Opinion: But that it ſignifies the whole Narration

ration of the Poet, or a neceſſary and eſſential Part of the Action and the proper Subject, extended and amplified by probable Circumſtances.

This Concluſion deſerves a more particular Examination.

CHAP. V.

Concerning the Nature of Epiſodes.

AN *Epiſode*, according to *Ariſtotle*, ſhould not be taken from ſomething elſe and added to the Action; but ſhould conſtitute a part of the Action it ſelf. That this is *Ariſtotle*'s Mind, we ſhall find, if we would but reflect, that this great Maſter, when he treated of *Epiſodes*, never made uſe of this Word *to Add*, although his Interpreters have found it ſo natural, that they have commonly made uſe of it in their Tranſlations and Notes.

When he commends *Homer* for taking only Part of the Siege of *Troy* for the *Subject-Matter* of his *Iliad*; he does not ſay that he has amplified it by Adding a great many *Epiſodes* to it; this Expreſſion would diſtinguiſh the *Epiſodes* from the Matter to which they would have been added: But he ſays,

* *That he made use of a great many* Episodes *of this Action:* And this denotes that the *Episodes* of the *Iliad* were Part of the Action which is the Subject-Matter thereof. And a few Lines after he says, † *That the Poet divided his Poem by* Episodes. This is what we observ'd before in *Oedipus*.

If the *Episodes* were taken elsewhere, and added to the Action, whereof they were not Parts, it would signifie little whether they were join'd and connected with one another or no, but they should be join'd to the Action, and this ‡ *Aristotle* should have taught us. And yet he does no such thing, but orders us *to connect them with one another*.

He does not say, that after one has prepar'd the Platform of the Fable, and made Choice of the Names, one should add the *Episodes*; but he makes use of a Verb deriv'd from this Word; as if we should say in our Language, ‖ "That the Poet ought to *Episodize* his Action." And elsewhere he says, "That the *Episodes* should not be foreign, but * *proper* to "the Subject."

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* Ἐπεισοδίοις κέχρηται αὐτοῦ πολλοῖς. Poet. c. 23.

† Ἐπεισοδίοις διαλαμβάνει τὴν ποίησιν. Ibid.

‡ Τὰ Ἐπεισόδια μετ' ἄλληλα ἴδ. Cap. 9.

‖ Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, ἥδε ἐπιθέντα τὰ ὀνόματα ἐπεισοδιοῦν. Cap. 17.

* Ἔσται οἰκεῖα τὰ ἐπεισόδια. Ibid.

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In fine, we might likewiſe alledge that very Chapter, wherein *Ariſtotle* lays down the firſt Draught of the *Odyſſeis*, and which he concludes by ſaying, that whatever he has propos'd *is proper to the Subject, and that the* Epiſodes *make up the reſt.* In this Paſſage, to give us a Reaſon of the different Extent of *Tragedy* and the *Epopéa*; or to inform us how this laſt becomes longer: He does not ſay, that they *Add* a few *Epiſodes* to the *Tragick Action*, and a great many to the *Epick*; but he ſays more exactly, *That the* Epiſodes *of Tragedy are ſhort and conciſe, and the* Epopéa *is extended and amplified by its* Epiſodes. He demonſtrates this Length of the *Epopéa* amplified by the Extent of its *Epiſodes*, by the Poem of the *Odyſſeis*, which he brings as an Example, and ſays, * *The Subject of it is long.* Now if the *Epiſodes* (take the Word in what Senſe you pleaſe) be not Part of the Subject, 'tis plain the more Room they take up the leſs is left for the Subject; and that the longer they are, the more ſtraitned and ſhort will the Subject be. If then the *Epopéa* be ſtretch'd out by its *Epiſodes*, and if for this very Reaſon the Subject of the *Odyſſeis* is long, as *Ariſtotle* affirms; it then neceſſarily follows, that the *Subject* is nothing elſe but the very *Epiſodes.*

* Τῆς Ὀδυσσείας μακρὸς ὁ λόγος ἐστίν. Ibid.

The better to demonſtrate this Length of the *Odyſſeis*, *Ariſtotle* adds, *That the Subject of this Poem is a Voyage for ſeveral Years*; *That* Neptune *did all he could to hinder the chief Perſonage from returning home*; *that he does return thither notwithſtanding*; *where he meets with very great Diſorders, the Authors of which he puniſhes, and ſo reſtores Peace and Quietneſs to his Kingdom.* This Subject is indeed a great deal longer than that of the *Iliad*; and it requires a longer time, and more Actions for all theſe Things, than for the ſimple Anger of an enrag'd and pacified Perſon, where every Thing was tranſacted in one and the ſame Place.

This Length of the *Odyſſeis*, compar'd to that of the *Iliad*, would ſtill hold good, tho' we ſhould ſubſtract from it the ſeveral Years which preceed the opening of the Poem; and began the Action only at the time of the firſt Council of the Gods. For it would be ſtill longer than that of the *Iliad* by a fifth Part; the one taking up 58 Days, and the other only 47 or 48.

But one cannot exclude from the Subject that which preceeds the opening of the Poem, and that which *Ulyſſes* relates to *Alcinous*, without contradicting * *Ariſtotle*, by reducing into the Compaſs of leſs than two Months, what he ſays took up *ſeveral Years*. This would be

* Ἀποδημίας τινὸς ἔτη πολλά. Cap. 17.

to

to give * *Homer* himſelf the Lie, who ſays, *That his Subject contains the Voyages and Travels of a Man, who after the taking of* Troy, *ſaw ſeveral Cities, and knew the Cuſtoms of a great many States and People*: He ſays, *that he ſuffer'd much by Sea, and did all he could to ſecure the Return of his Attendants as well as of himſelf.* Now all this did not happen ſince the firſt Council of the Gods. Then, there were ſeven whole Years, in which he never ſo much as thought of his Attendants, for they were all deſtroy'd. And ſince that, there happen'd but one Tempeſt, and he viſited no more than one City. Theſe ſeven Years then, and all the Adventures, the Travels, and the Tempeſts which preceeded, from the Ruin of *Troy* down to that Time, are not extraneous, foreign, or additional Pieces; but are with the reſt the Subject of the Poem. And yet they are *Epiſodes*, as *Ariſtotle* aſſerts in theſe Words, *The reſt are Epiſodes*: For this *Reſt* is all that he did not name in particular. Now he ſpoke only in general, of the Abſence of *Ulyſſes*, of the Storms he met with, of the Diſturbances of *Ithaca*, and of the Re-eſtabliſhment of this Prince.

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* Ὃς μάλα πολλὰ πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσε. Πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα, καὶ νόον ἔγνω. Πολλὰ δ' ὅγ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα. ὃν κατὰ θυμὸν Ἀρνύμενος καὶ ἑταίρων. Odyſſ. 1.

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In ſhort, when we diſcours'd of the Nature of the Fable, we there took notice of the abſolute Neceſſity the Poet lay under of keeping *Ulyſſes* from his Country a very long time; of ordering his Abſence as cauſed by the Storms he met with; of caſting this Heroe upon ſeveral different Countries; of raiſing great Diſorders in *Ithaca*; of making an Example of his Enemies by puniſhing them; and of reeſtabliſhing the Prince himſelf. This was ſo far neceſſary to the Subject, that the Poet was not left to his Liberty of changing it, without deſtroying his Deſign, ſpoiling his Fable, and making another Poem of it.

But tho' it was neceſſary that *Ulyſſes* ſhould be with ſtrange Princes for ſeveral Years; yet it was not neceſſary that one of theſe Princes ſhould be *Antiphates*, another *Alcinous*; nor that the Nymph *Calypſo*, and the Enchantreſs *Circe* ſhould be his Hoſteſſes. One might have changed theſe Perſons and States into others, without changing the Deſign and the Fable. Thus, tho' theſe Adventures were part of the Subject after the Poet's Choice of them, yet they were not proper to the Subject.

It is likewiſe neceſſary to the Subject, that *Ulyſſes* revenge himſelf, and puniſh his Wife's Courtiers; but 'tis neither proper nor neceſſary that he ſhould kill them with Javelins, as they were at Supper in his Houſe, at Night too, and none to aſſiſt him but his Son and two or three of his Domeſticks. He might have appear'd at the Head of an Army, and with-

without the leaſt Surprize have kill'd them with his drawn Sword at their own Houſes, or in the open Field. But yet will any Man ſay, that his killing them with Javelins is not part of the Subject?

In a Word, the Revenge he takes, and the puniſhing of theſe Miſcreants, expreſs'd in ſhort, as we ſee it in the Model *Ariſtotle* has left us, is a ſimple Action proper and neceſſary to the Subject. It is not an *Epiſode*, but the Foundation and Soul of an *Epiſode*: And this ſame Puniſhment explain'd and amplified with all the Circumſtances of Times, Places, and Perſons, is not a ſimple and proper Action, but an *Epiſodiz'd Action*, and a true *Epiſode*: And tho' the Poet is left at his Freedom and Choice therein, yet it does not follow that the *Epiſode* is form'd upon a leſs proper and neceſſary Foundation.

Tis in this laſt Senſe, and of this only ſort of *Epiſodes*, we ſhall generally ſpeak.

CHAP. VI.

The Definition of Epiſodes.

AFter what has been ſaid, we may very well infer, *That* Epiſodes *are neceſſary Parts of the Action, extended by probable Circumſtances.*

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An *Epiſode* is but a Part of an Action, and not an entire one; like that of *Hypſipyle* in *Statius*, which renders this Poem defective and *Epiſodical*.

That Part of the Action which ſerves for a Foundation to the *Epiſode*, ought not to continue in its Simplicity; ſuch as it is in the General related in the firſt Draught of the Fable. *Ariſtotle* having recounted the Parts of the *Odyſſeis*, ſays expreſsly, that *they are proper*: And in this Caſe diſtinguiſhes them from the *Epiſodes*. Thus in the Inſtance of *Oedipus* which we produc'd, we ſaid, that the Cure of the *Thebans* is not an *Epiſode*, but only the Foundation and Subject of an *Epiſode*, which the Poet made no uſe of. And *Ariſtotle* (by ſaying that *Homer* in the *Iliad* has taken but a few Things for his Subject, but that *he has made uſe of a great many Epiſodes*) does inform us, that the Subject contains in it ſelf a great many *Epiſodes*, which the Poet may or may not make uſe of. That is, it contains the Foundation of them, which one may leave in its general and ſimple Brevity, as *Seneca* has done the Cure of the *Thebans*; or which one may enlarge and explain, as the ſame Author has done the Chaſtiſement of *Oedipus*. In this laſt way 'tis that the Poet makes uſe of them, and forms juſt *Epiſodes* out of them.

The Subject of a Poem may be long after two ways: The firſt is, when the Poet makes uſe of a great many of its *Epiſodes*: And the other

other is, when he gives to each a conſiderable Extent. 'Tis by this Method, that the *Epick* Poets extend their Poems a great deal more than the *Dramatick*.

We muſt likewiſe take notice, that there are ſome Parts of an Action which of themſelves do naturally preſent us but with one ſingle *Epiſode*; as, the Death of *Hector*, that of *Turnus*, &c. There are likewiſe more fertile Parts of the Fable, which oblige the Poet to form ſeveral *Epiſodes* of each Part, though in the firſt Model they are expreſs'd in as ſimple a manner as the reſt. Such are, the Fight between the *Trojans* and the *Grecians*; the Abſence of *Ulyſſes*; the Travels of *Æneas*, &c.

For the Abſence of *Ulyſſes* from his own Country during ſo many Years together, does neceſſarily require his Preſence elſewhere; and the Deſign of the Fable obliges him to be caſt into ſeveral Dangers, and upon ſeveral States. Now each Danger, and each State, furniſhes Matter for an *Epiſode*, which the Poet may make uſe of, if he pleaſe.

We conclude then, that *Epiſodes* are not Actions, but the parts of an Action: That they are not added to the Action, and the *Matter* of the Poem; but that they conſtitute this Action and this Matter, as the Members of the Body conſtitute the Matter of it: That upon this Account they are not deduc'd from any thing elſe, but the very Foundation of the Action: That they are not united and connected to the Action, but to one another: That

all

all the parts of an Action are not ſo many *Epiſodes*; but only ſuch as are amplified and extended by particular Circumſtances, and in the manner whereby the Poet rehearſes a Thing: And laſtly, That this Union between each other, is neceſſary in the Foundation of the *Epiſode*, and probable in the Circumſtances.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Unity of the Action.

THere are four Qualifications in the *Epick Action*: The firſt is its *Unity*; the ſecond its *Integrity*; the third its *Importance*; and the fourth its *Duration*. We will begin with the firſt.

In this Place we ſhall conſider the *Unity of the Action*, not only in the firſt Draught and Model of the Fable, but in the extended and *Epiſodiz'd Action*. And in truth, if the *Epiſodes* are not added to the Action, but on the contrary are the neceſſary Parts thereof; it is plain, that they ought to be comprehended in it, and its *Unity* ſtill preſerv'd: And the Fables which *Ariſtotle* calls *Epiſodical* are ſuch, wherein ſome *Epiſodes* that are foreign, and not duly connected, add ſome Actions to the Action of the Poem, and ſo ſpoil the *Unity* of it.

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The *Unity of the Epick Action*, as well as the *Unity of the Fable*, does not conſiſt either in the *Unity of the Heroe*, or in *the Unity of Time*: This is what we have already taken notice of. But 'tis eaſier to tell wherein it does not conſiſt, than 'tis to diſcover wherein it does.

From the Idea I have conceived thereof by reading our Authors, theſe three Things, I ſuppoſe, are neceſſary thereto. The firſt is, to make uſe of no *Epiſode*, but what ariſes from the very Platform and Foundation of the Action, and is as it were a Natural Member of this Body. The ſecond is, exactly to unite theſe *Epiſodes*, and theſe Members, with one another. And the third is, never to finiſh any *Epiſode* ſo as it may ſeem to be an entire Action; but to let each *Epiſode* ſtill appear in its own particular Nature, as the Member of a Body, and as a Part of it ſelf not compleat.

We have already eſtabliſhed the firſt of theſe three Qualifications, in the Doctrine we laid down concerning the *Epiſodes*; and perhaps enough has been ſaid about it: But yet we will clear up this Doctrine by ſome Inſtances taken from the principal *Epiſodes* of the *Æneid*.

In the Scheme we have drawn of the Fable and Action of this Poem, we have obſerved, that *Æneas* ought of neceſſity to be a King newly elected, and the Founder of an Empire rais'd upon the Ruins of a decay'd State: That this

this Prince ſhould be oppos'd by wicked Men: And laſtly, that he ſhould be eſtabliſhed by Piety and the Force of Arms.

The firſt Part of this Action is the Alteration of a State, of a King, and of a Prieſt. And this is *Virgil*'s firſt *Epiſode*, contain'd in his ſecond Book, wherein the * Poet deſcribes the Subverſion of the *Trojan* Empire in *Aſia*, the Death of King *Priam*, and of the Prieſt *Panthus*. To all this he adds the Choice which both Gods and Men make of *Æneas* to be the Succeſſor of theſe two deceaſed Perſons, and to re-eſtabliſh the Empire of the *Trojans* in *Italy*.

The ſecond Part of the Action begins, when *Æneas* ſets himſelf upon his Duty, executes the Orders he receives, and marches for *Italy*. *Virgil* has placed almoſt all this ſecond *Epiſode* in his third Book: The reſt lies in the firſt, in the fifth, and in the beginning of the ſeventh.

The third Part of the Action is the eſtabliſhing *Religion* and *Laws*. *Religion* conſiſts in Sacrifices, in Funeral Rites, and Feſtival Sports. *Æneas* performed all theſe; and the † Poet took care from time to time to adver-

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* Sacra ſuoſque tibi commendat Troja penates: Hos cape fatorum comites, his mœnia quære, *&c. Æneid.* 2.

† Hac caſti maneant in religione Nepotes. *Æneid.* 3.

tiſe

tiſe his Readers, that theſe Ceremonies were not to be conſider'd as ſo many particular Actions, or as the ſimple Effects of the Heroe's Piety upon ſome particular Occaſions; but as ſacred Rites, which he was going to * transfer into *Italy* under the Quality of the *Founder of the Roman Empire.* By this means, no Body can doubt of his meaning, nor take theſe Acts of *Religion*, and theſe *Epiſodes*, for any thing elſe but the neceſſary and eſſential Parts of his *Action* and *Matter.* This Part furniſhes the Poet with ſeveral *Epiſodes*, which he diſtributes into ſeveral Parts of his Work; as in the third Book, where *Æneas* receives from *Helenus* the Ceremonies which hereafter he was oblig'd to inſtitute: In the fifth, where he celebrates the Sports hard by his Father's Tomb: And elſewhere almoſt throughout the whole Poem.

Virgil deſign'd his ſixth Book for the other part about *Laws*, viz. for the Morality, for the Politicks, and for the forming ſuch a Genius as was to animate the Body-politick of the *Roman* State.

After theſe Parts of the *Action*, which contain the performance of the Heroe's Deſigns, we are to conſider likewiſe the Obſtacles he meets with, which make up the *Intrigues* of the Action. Theſe Obſtacles are the Effects of

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* Hinc maxima porro Accepit Roma, & patrium ſervavit honorem. *Æneid.* 5.

Juno's

Juno's Paſſion. And we might ſay, that this Oppoſition is no leſs proper to the *Æneid*, than the Oppoſition of *Neptune* is to the *Odyſſeis*. Now we obſerv'd that *Ariſtotle* placed the Anger of this God in the firſt Draught of the Greek Poem among the Incidents that are proper to it.

The firſt of theſe *Intrigues*, and the moſt conſiderable Obſtacle of all, is that of *Dido*, which takes up the firſt and fourth Book. The ſecond is the Burning of his Fleet in the fifth Book. The third is the Love, the Ambition, and the Valour of *Turnus*. This laſt ſupply'd him with a great many *Epiſodes*, being the Cauſe of all the War *Æneas* met with in *Italy*. It begins at the ſeventh Book, and is not over till the End of the Poem. 'Tis thus that the *Epiſodes* of the *Æneid* are deduc'd from the Fable and the very Eſſence of the Action.

The ſecond Thing we ſaid was neceſſary for the *Unity of the Action*, is the Unity and the Connexion of the *Epiſodes* with one another. For beſides that Relation and Proportion which all the Members ought to have with one another, ſo as to conſtitute but one Body, which ſhould be homogeneous in all its Parts; 'tis requir'd farther, that theſe Members ſhould be, not contiguous as if they were cut off and clap'd together again, but uninterrupted and duly connected. Without this, the natural Members would not make up that Union, which is neceſſary to conſtitute a Body.

The

The *Continuity* and Situation of *Episodes* is not exact, when they only follow one another: But they should be plac'd one after another so as the first shall either be necessarily or probably the Cause of that which follows. * *Aristotle* finds fault with Incidents that are without any Consequence or Connexion; and he says that *the Poems, wherein such sorts of Episodes are, offend against the Unity of Action.* He brings, as an Instance of this Defect, the Wound which *Ulysses* receiv'd upon *Parnassus*, and the Folly he counterfeited before the *Grecian* Princes: Because one of these Incidents could not have happen'd as a Consequence of the other; *Homer* could not have given them a necessary Connexion and Continuity: Nor has he spoil'd the *Unity* of the *Odysseis* by such a Mixture.

But he gives us a compleat Instance of the *Continuity* we speak of, in the Method whereby he has connected the two Parts of his *Iliad*; which are the Anger of *Achilles* against *Agamemnon*, and the Anger of the same Heroe against *Hector*. The Poet would not have duly connected these two *Episodes*, if before the Death of *Patroclus*, *Achilles* had been less inexorable, and had accepted of the Satisfaction

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* Ὧν οὐδὲν θατέρου γενωμένου, ἀναγκαῖον ἢν ἢ εἰκὸς θάτερον γενέσθαι· ἀλλὰ ἃ περὶ μιὰν πρᾶξιν, οἷον λέγομεν τὴν Ὀδύσσειαν ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὴν Ἰλίαδα. Poet. cap. 8.

Aga-

Agamemnon offer'd him. This would have made two Angers and two Revenges quite different from, and independent of one another. And tho' both had been neceſſary and eſſential to the Fable, to make it appear what Miſchiefs Diſcord, and what Advantages Concord is the Cauſe of: Yet the *Unity* would have been only in the Fable, but the Action would have been double and *Epiſodical*: Becauſe the firſt *Epiſode* would not have been the Cauſe of the ſecond, nor the ſecond a Conſequence of the firſt.

Theſe two Parts of the *Iliad* are joyn'd together very regularly. If *Achilles* had never fell out with *Agamemnon*, he would have fought in Perſon, and not have expos'd his Friend ſingly againſt *Hector*, under thoſe Arms that were the cauſe of this young Man's Raſhneſs and Death. And beſides, the better to joyn theſe two Parts with one another, the ſecond is begun a great while before one ſees what Event the firſt ought to have. All the Articles of the Reconciliation are propos'd, and one might ſay, that this Reconciliation, with reſpect to *Agamemnon*, is made before the Death of *Patroclus*, and even before it was ever thought of expoſing him to a Battel. There was nothing more wanting but *Achilles*'s Conſent: And ſince that was not given till the Death of *Patroclus* had made him reſolve upon that of *Hector*; it may be truly affirmed, that the Anger and the Revenge of *Achilles* againſt *Hector*, which is nothing elſe but

but the ſecond Part of the Poem, is the only Cauſe of the Reconciliation, which finiſh'd the firſt Part.

But for the *Unity* of a Body, it is not enough that all its Members be natural, and duly united and compacted together; 'tis farther requiſite, that each Member ſhould be no more than a Member; an imperfect Part, and not a finiſh'd compleat Body. This is the third Qualification we ſaid was neceſſary to preſerve *the Unity of the Epick Action.*

For the better underſtanding of this Doctrine, we muſt take notice that an Action may be entire and compleat two ways: The firſt is, by perfectly compleating it, and making it abſolutely entire with reſpect to the principal Perſons that are intereſted therein, and in the principal Circumſtances which are employ'd about it. The ſecond way is by compleating it only with reſpect to ſome Perſons, and in ſome Circumſtances that are leſs principal. The ſecond way preſerves the Action in its regular *Unity*, the other deſtroys it. We will give you an Inſtance of each.

The *Greeks* were aſſembled together to revenge the Affront offer'd to *Menelaus*, and to force the *Trojans* to reſtore him his Wife, whom *Paris* had ſtollen away. There happens a Difference between *Agamemnon* and *Achilles*. This laſt being highly incens'd, abandons the Common Cauſe, and withdraws himſelf; ſo that in his Abſence *Agamemnon*'s Army was worſted by the *Trojans*. But the Boldneſs

neſs of this King of Kings puts him upon engaging the Enemy without *Achilles*. Away he marches to give them a general Aſſault with all his Forces.

The Fight began with the Duel between *Menelaus* and *Paris*. They fight without Seconds, upon Condition that *Helen* ſhould be the Conquerour's, and the War decided by this Combat. Tho' the Anger of *Achilles* was the Cauſe of this Combat, and whatever Intereſt he might have therein; yet 'tis plain, that *Menelaus*, *Paris*, and *Helen* are ſo far the principal Perſonages concern'd, that if this Action had been finiſhed with reſpect to them, it would have been quite finiſh'd: It would not have made a part of the Action and of the Revenge of *Achilles*, but a compleat Action; which would have put an End to the Revenge, and render'd the Anger of this Heroe ineffectual. Therefore *Homer* has not finiſh'd this Action: *Paris* being hard put to it eſcapes, and *Menelaus* is wounded with a Dart by *Pandarus*; by this means *Achilles* begins to be reveng'd, and this Incident becomes an axact *Epiſode*.

Virgil has manag'd the *Epiſode* of *Dido* another way. He has finiſh'd it ſo, that the *Union* of his main Action is as Regular as the Art of Poetry requires. The Addreſs of this great Poet conſiſts in ordering it ſo, that *Dido*, in whom this Incident is compleat, was not the chief Perſonage; and her Marriage was only a ſimple Circumſtance of an Action, that

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is not finiſh'd, and yet is the Soul and the only Foundation of this particular Action: In a Word, *Æneas* is the Heroe of this *Epiſode*, which is only invented to retard the Settlement of this Heroe in *Italy*.

This is manifeſt, if we would but reflect on what the Skill and Care of the Poet has left us about it. *Juno*, who carried on all this Intrigue, was very little concern'd for *Dido*'s Happineſs. If ſhe had lov'd her ſo well, ſhe ſhould have diverted the *Trojan* Fleet from her Coaſts; upon which Place ſhe her ſelf did caſt them, * which was the only Cauſe of this Queen's Miſeries. When ſhe propoſes the Match to *Venus* with ſo much Ardency, 'twas only the top of her Countenance. † Her whole Aim was to keep *Æneas* in *Africk*, and to beſtow on *Carthage* the Empire of the World, which belonged only to *Italy*, and depended upon the Stars of this Heroe. You ſee then the only Thing ſhe drives at, the reſt is only counterfeit, and a Means whereby ſhe endeavours to accompliſh this End.

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* Fœlix, heu! nimium fœlix, ſi littora tantum
Nunquam Dardaniæ tetigiſſent noſtra carinæ.
Æneid. 4.

† Senſit enim ſimulatâ mente locutam,
Quo regnum Italiæ Libycas averteret oras.

Dido her ſelf makes it appear how leſs conſiderable her Perſon is than that of *Æneas*, and that ſhe is only brought in to hinder the Deſigns of this Prince. 'Tis ſhe, that courts him, and would have him for her King, Huſband, and Protector, againſt the Rage of her Brother and the Incurſions of *Iarbas*. But ſhe could only obtain a Marriage for a Month or ſo, as was cuſtomary now and then in thoſe Times. *Æneas* tells her plainly, that the Name of Husband ſhould be no Hinderance to his Departure, and his Deſigns for *Italy*: And he declares, that this Condition of not leaving *Carthage* was not in the Articles of their Alliance.

The more an *Epiſode* may ſeem to be a compleat Action, the more Care ſhould the Poet take to prepare the Reader's Mind, before he engages him in it. This is what *Virgil* did in the *Epiſode* we mentioned. All the beginning of the firſt Book does ſufficiently inform the Reader, that the Stay of *Æneas* at *Carthage* was only a Hinderance and Conſtraint which he was forced to ſubmit to. The Poet is likewiſe obliged to repeat this Advertiſement at the beginning of theſe *Epiſodes*; that ſo the Reader may know to what the Poet engages him. Thus the *Trojans* were ſcarce got to *Carthage*, but they give out that their Deſign is for *Italy*. And before *Dido* made the leaſt ſhew of her Deſigns upon *Æneas*; the Poet ſpends the ſecond and third Books to inform us of this Heroe's Deſign, and the Neceſſity of his

his going to *Italy*, according to the Orders he received from the Oracles and the Gods. All this is declar'd in his Speech to *Dido* her self. To conclude, All this *Episode* is so full of this main Design, that the Poet is not willing we should lose the Sight of it for a Moment. Therefore *Æneas* is doubtless the Heroe of this *Episode*: And we ought to look upon this Incident rather as an Obstacle laid to hinder the Settlement of the *Trojans* in *Italy*, than as the History of *Dido*, in whom it is a compleat Action.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Faults which corrupt the Unity *of the* Action.

HOmer and *Virgil* have furnished us with Instances of an *exact Unity*, with the three Qualifications we requir'd. We must now enquire elsewhere for Instances of an *Unity* that is corrupted by *Episodes* that are irregular all these three Ways: That is, first, such as are deriv'd from something else besides the Action; secondly, such as have no Connexion with the rest of the Poem, nor with the Members and Parts, which are the Matter thereof; and lastly, such as are compleat Actions, independent from the Subject. These vicious and

ſuperfluous *Epiſodes* may be met with not only in the *Middle* of the *Poem*, but at the *Beginning* and the *End*.

The *Thebaid* of *Statius* furniſhes us with all theſe Inſtances, as his *Achilleid* has already afforded us an Inſtance of that falſe *Unity*, which conſiſts only in the *Unity* of the Heroe.

The unfortunate *Oedipus* had pluck'd out his own Eyes; and baniſhing himſelf from *Thebes*, left the Government of it to *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, his two Sons. They order'd Matters ſo, that each of them, one after another, ſhould Reign a whole Year by himſelf. But the Eldeſt being in Poſſeſſion, when his Time was out, refus'd to quit the Throne. *Polynices*, in his Exile, was ſo happy as to marry the Daughter of *Adraſtus*, King of *Argos*. This aged Prince takes up the Quarrel, and with the Aſſiſtance of his Allies undertakes to ſettle *Polynices* on the Throne, and to out *Eteocles*. Upon this *Thebes* is beleaguer'd, and after ſeveral Skirmiſhes, this Difference was decided by the Duel and Death of the two Rival Brothers. This War between the two *Theban* Brothers, is the * *Action* our Poet would relate, and the *Subject-Matter* of the *Thebaid*.

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t * Fraternas acies alternaq; regna prophanis Decerata odiis, ſonteſque evolvere Thebas, Pierius menti calor incidit. *Theb.* 1.

But

But obſerve another Action, or rather another Story. The Goddeſs *Venus* is offended with the Inhabitants of *Lemnos*, becauſe in all that Iſland ſhe had neither Temple, Altar, nor Sacrifice. At firſt ſhe puts the Men out of conceit with their Wives; and then ſhe makes the Women ſo mad, as to conſpire the Death of all their Husbands. This barbarous Reſolution is moſt unmercifully put in Execution. *Hypſipyle* was the only Woman who had ſecretly ſaved her Father King *Troas*, and ſo ingeniouſly diſſembles the having murder'd him, that the reſt confer the Kingdom upon her, as belonging to that Family.

A little after the *Argonauts*, going in queſt of the Golden-Fleece, are forc'd by a Storm to call in and recruit themſelves at *Lemnos*. They were very kindly entertain'd there; and the badneſs of the Seaſon gave *Jaſon*, the chief of theſe *Heroe's*, an opportunity of leaving *Hypſipyle* big with Twins, before he put off to Sea.

She was ſcarce brought to Bed, but 'twas told her Subjects, that they had been cheated, and that King *Troas* was alive, and reign'd in the Iſle of *Chios*, whither *Hypſipyle* had convey'd him, tho' ſhe had pretended ſhe had murder'd him. This made the Princeſs ſo odious, that fearing the Fury of thoſe Women ſhe fled to the Sea-ſhore, where ſhe was ſeiz'd on and carry'd off by Pirates. They beſtow her on King *Lycurgus*, who makes her the Nurſe of his Son *Archemorus*.

The State of this Prince border'd upon *Thebes*, and lay in the Road the Army of *Adraſtus* was to paſs thither. The *Greeks* met with this famous Nurſe as ſhe was alone with her Nurſery in a Wood. They were extreme thirſty, all the Wells being dry'd up by the ſcorching Seaſons. They intreat her to give them ſome relief; ſhe grants their requeſt, and brings them to a Fountain that never was drain'd. She was ſo forward, that to make the more haſt to this wiſh'd for Stream, ſhe eaſes her ſelf of her precious Burden with which ſhe was intruſted, and leaves *Archemorus* all alone upon the Graſs. She goes to quench the *Grecians* Thirſt; and then to ſatisfie the deſire they had of knowing who ſhe was, that had been the ſaving of them, ſhe makes a large Recital of her own Life.

After ſhe had made an end, and receiv'd the Compliments of *Adraſtus*, ſhe returns back to her Prince. But a frightful Serpent had kill'd him by a blow with his Tail. The *Greeks* kill the Serpent, and in Honour of the dead Prince make a ſplendid Funeral, and inſtitute moſt magnificent Sports, which take up a whole Book of the *Thebaid*. The Recitals of *Hypſipyle*, and the Death of *Archemorus* fill up another.

Theſe are foreign *Epiſodes*, and if they are regular, I cannot imagine what uſe the Rules of *Ariſtotle* can be of in this Buſineſs. But let us ſee whether theſe Incidents have ſo much as one ſingle Qualification of thoſe which I propos'd

propos'd as neceſſary to the *Unity of the Action.*

The firſt of theſe Qualifications is that an *Epiſode* be proper and drawn from the very Eſſence of the Fable and the Subject. It would be hard to invent an Adventure more foreign to the War of the *Theban* Brothers, than all this Story of *Lemnos.* For what Affinity has the Anger of *Venus*, the butchering of the *Lemnians*, the Deſigns of the *Argonauts*, and the Amours of *Jaſon* and *Hypſipyle*, with the Quarrel between *Eteocles* and *Polynices?* To make a mix'd Medly of ſuch various Incidents, is juſt like forming one of * *Horace*'s Monſters: And never would a Woman's Head clap'd on to a Horſe's Neck appear more Monſtrous, than does this *Hypſipyle* tack'd to the War of *Thebes* appear in this Poem. This is the firſt and moſt eſſential Fault of this *Epiſode.*

The Second is in the Connexion, which is not at all in the *Thebaid*, Things being clap'd together without the leaſt neceſſity or probability. For pray what part of the Subject of the *Thebaid* is either the Cauſe, or the Effect of the Maſſacre at *Lemnos?* Or of any of the Adventures of *Jaſon?*

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* Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam Jungere ſi velit, & varias inducere plumas, Undique collatis membris, &c. *Hor. Poet.*

'Tis true, *Hypſipyle* makes this Recital to the *Argives*, as they were going to infeſt *Thebes*; but there is a great deal of difference between connecting the Recital of an Action to ſomething, and connecting the very Action to it. If for the introducing a Narration into the Body of a Poem, and connecting it thereto, ſo as to make a juſt *Epiſode* of it, 'tis enough that this Narration be made in the Preſence of the Heroe, by ſome Body that has ſome Intereſt therein; there would be no more need of Rules for the due *Uniting of Epiſodes*. For a Poet to fail of making this *Union* exactly, it would not be enough that he were Ignorant and Unskilful, but he ſhould be ſomething more; he ſhould be Malicious, and declare poſitively againſt all Connexions whatever. For without 'twere ſo, he would not be eaſily inclined to ſtuff a whole Book with the impertinent Deſcription of a Story that was nothing to the purpoſe.

The Sports of the ſixth Book of *Statius* are no leſs irregular. There is nothing in the Action to give them the leaſt Countenance. They have no reference to the War of *Thebes*, to the Deſigns of the *Argonauts*, nor to the mad Practices of *Lemnos*. Nor is it a Conſequence of the Stories of *Hypſipyle*; but rather a Conſequence of the Recital ſhe made of theſe Stories. They are tack'd to her Recital at one End, and at the other to the March of the *Grecians*, without the leaſt Neceſſity and Probability. And how could the fiery Tempers

pers of *Tydeus* and *Capaneus*, and the hot Spirits of the other Commanders away with ſuch languiſhing and godly Amuſements; and by Conſequence ſo oppoſite to the very Soul of the Poem, which conſiſts altogether in Violence and Impiety?

'Tis true the March of the *Argives* was the Cauſe of his Death for whom they inſtituted theſe Sports: But that it ſhould not have been; and ſince this Cauſe is no way neceſſary, and offends againſt all Probability, 'tis rather a freſh Fault, than any Excuſe. *Hypſipyle* had ſo little a way to go from the Place where ſhe left her Prince, to that whither ſhe conducted the *Grecians*; that from thence * ſhe hears this Infant's ſhrill Cry, when Death had almoſt ſtop'd his Mouth. Therefore if ſhe had any Concern for leaving *Archemorus*, ſhe ſhould not have ſtaid from him a moment. But could not a Soldier have leave to paſs a Compliment upon her for a few Minutes or ſo? To conclude, who did ever know a Nurſe ſo inconſiderate, as to leave her Child alone for ſeveral Hours in the midſt of a Foreſt, to the Mercy of wild Beaſts, expos'd to ſo many other Dangers; and to leave him in this manner without a Guard, tho' ſo many Thouſands were at Hand, to whom ſhe had done ſuch a ſingular

* Moriens vagitus in auras Excidit, & ruptis immutuit ore querelis; Qualia non totas peragunt inſomnia voces. Audiit Hypſipyle.——

Piece of Service? How could ſo many Redoubted Princes endure this Unworthy and Pooliſh expoſing of a Child without the leaſt Neceſſity for it? But what ſignifies it? *Virgil* had his Sports, and 'twas but requiſite *Statius* ſhould have his too.

The third Fault that may be committed againſt the *Unity* of the main *Action*, is to compleat an Action entirely, which ſhould ſerve for an *Epiſode*. This is likewiſe one of the Conditions of the Story of *Hypſipyle*: Nothing is more compleat in all its Circumſtances. It makes no part of any other Action: 'Tis an entire Action, that has no dependance on any of the *Theban* Worthies, or the other *Grecians* of this Poem; of whom not one has the leaſt Intereſt in what paſs'd at *Lemnos*. Thus, the *Unity of the Action* is entirely ſpoil'd in the *Thebaid* by this Adventure, the Recital whereof makes the Poem *Epiſodical*.

This Fault of *Statius* is in the very Middle of his Poem. It has cut the Action of it into two Parts, moſt monſtrouſly divided by this large *Hiatus*, which is ſo miſerably fill'd up with foreign Members, or rather foreign Bodies. But, as I before hinted, theſe Superfluities corrupt the *Unity* as much when they are plac'd at the *Beginning* or *End*, as when they are in the *Middle* and Body of the Poem. *Statius* affords us Inſtances of this kind of Fault likewiſe.

Had

Had he * begun the War of *Thebes* with the Inceſtuous Birth of *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, he would have imitated thoſe, who began the War of *Troy* with the Birth of *Helen*, tho' even that met with † *Horace*'s Cenſure. But ‡ he carries Matters ſtill higher, goes back as far as the firſt founding of *Thebes*, and opens his Poem with the Rape of *Europa*, which was the firſt Cauſe of building that City.

He ends juſt as he began. The Quarrel of the two Brothers was manifeſtly decided by their Deaths, there remained no more Difficulty, the Siege was rais'd, and all over. And when the Reader expects no more, the Poet, who has quite drained his *Matter*, gives us notice of his joyning another Story thereto, which was the Conſequence thereof, juſt as the Return of *Ulyſſes* is the Conſequence of *Hector*'s death, and the taking of *Troy*; and as the Reign of *Aſcanius* is the Conſequence of the Eſtabliſhment of *Æneas*. *Thebes* has no longer the *Argives* but the *Athenians* for its Enemies; 'tis no longer defended by *Eteocles*, but by *Creon*; and not aſſaulted by *Polynices*, but by *Theſeus*. The Diſpute is no longer about a

* Limen mihi Carminis eſto, Oedipodæ confuſa domus. *Theb.* 1.

† Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab Ovo. *Hor. Poet.*

‡ Gentiſque canam primordia diræ, Sidonios raptus, & inexorabile pactum Legis Agenoreæ, ſervatamque æquora Cadmum. *Stat. Theb.* 1.

King-

Kingdom, but a Tyrant to be punished. 'Tis no more a Siege but the the taking of a City. And now no longer is Cruelty, Ambition, and Violence predominant there; but Valour, Generosity, and Piety, which in the last Book destroy the Character of the whole Poem. So that the Action is quite Another, in the Cause, in the End, in the Persons, in the Manner, and in all the other Circumstances. These are the Faults which manifestly spoil the *Unity of the Epick Action.*

CHAP. IX.

Of the Integrity of the Action.

Aristotle not only says that the *Epick Action* should be *One*, but * he adds that *it should be Entire, Perfect, and Compleat: And for this Purpose, it must have a Beginning, a Middle, and an End.* Herein these Actions differ from those of *Æsop's* Fables; for there is no Necessity that these last should be Entire and Compleat. Witness

* Περὶ μιᾶν πρᾶξιν ὅλην καὶ τελείαν, ἔχουσαν ἀρχὴν, καὶ μέσον, καὶ τέλος. Poet. c. 23.

the

the † Fable of the meager Hunger-ſtarved *Fox*, who convey'd himſelf thro' a very ſmall Hole into a Granary full of Corn. When he had cram'd his Guts, he was for marching the ſame Way out again: But he found himſelf too Corpulent. A *Weezel* at a diſtance ſeeing him in ſuch a quandary tells him, *He came empty in, and muſt go as empty out.* Now there's no Neceſſity of finiſhing this Action. *Reynard* is very regularly left in this Place without telling what happened to him afterwards; and without troubling one's Head, whether he was kill'd upon the Spot, or pinched his Guts to ſave his Carcaſs, or whether he eſcaped at ſome other Hole. This Action then is not a *Whole*, becauſe it has only a *Beginning* and *Middle*, but not an *End*.

Theſe three Parts of a Whole are too Generally and Univerſally denoted by the Words, *Beginning*, *Middle*, and *End*: We may interpret them more preciſely, and ſay, That the Cauſes and Deſigns which one takes for doing an Action are the *Beginning* of this Action; That the Effects of theſe Cauſes, and the Difficulties that are met with in the Execution

† Forte per anguſtam tenuis Vulpecula rimam Repſerat in cameram frumenti, paſtaque rurſus Ire foras pleno tendebat corpore fruſtra: Cui Muſtela procul: ſi vis ait effugere iſthinc, Macra cavum repetes arctum, quem macra ſubiſti. *Hor. Lib.* 1. *Ep.* 7.

of

of theſe Deſigns are the *Middle* of it; and that the Unravelling and Reſolution of theſe Difficulties are the *End* of the Action.

This *End*, and this Unravelling may happen after different Ways, and ſo form ſeveral ſorts of Actions. For ſometimes the Action ends by the diſcovery of ſome Perſon, who was unknown before, as in the Tragedy of *Oedipus*. This Prince thought himſelf the Son of *Polybus* and *Meropa*, King and Queen of *Corinth*: And he diſcovers himſelf to be a *Theban*, the Son of *Laius* and *Jocaſta*. Sometimes without any Diſcovery, there is a great Change of Fortune in ſome Perſon or other, who thinking himſelf happy, all on a ſudden falls into a Miſery he never dream'd of; or elſe on the contrary, becomes from a miſerable, a very happy Perſon beyond all Expectation. The firſt of theſe was *Agamemnon*'s Caſe after the Ruine of *Troy*, who thinking himſelf in quiet Poſſeſſion of his acquired Glory, was miſerably butchered by his Wife. * Theſe Changes or Alterations from one kind of Fortune to the Contrary are called by a *Greek* Name *Peripetia's*.

Sometimes likewiſe there is neither a Diſcovery nor a *Peripetia*; but the Action ceaſes, and paſſes, if I may ſo ſay, from Motion to Reſt after a ſimple Manner, without any Inci-

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* Ἔστι δὲ Περιπέτεια μὲν ἡ εἰς τὸ ἐναντίον τῶν πραττομένων μεταβολή. Ariſt. Poet. c. 11.

dent:

dent, but ſuch as might be expected in the Ordinary Courſe of Affairs. Thus in the *Troad* of *Seneca*, *Hecuba* and the *Trojans* appear at firſt as in Captivity, and under a long Series of Afflictions, which made them complain with their Tongues, and deſpair in their Hearts. The Ghoſt of *Achilles* requires *Polixena* ſhould be ſacrificed to him, and before they part, *Calchas* would make them kill *Aſtyanax* too. Both are put in Execution, and ſo the Tragedy ends.

* Theſe different ways make two ſorts of Action or Fable: The one *Simple*, the Other *Complex*. *The Simple Actions are ſuch as End without a Diſcovery and a Peripetia; The Complex have either a Diſcovery, or a Peripetia, or Both.*

The *Integrity* of the Action comprehends all theſe Things: Let us now take a particular View of them.

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* Εἰσὶ δὲ τῶν μύθων οἱ μὲν ἁπλοῖ, οἱ δὲ πεπλεγμένοι, ἦ γὰρ αἱ πράξεις ὧν μιμήσεις οἱ μῦθοι εἰσὶν, ὑπάρχουσιν εὐθὺς οὖσαι τοιαῦται. Λέγω δὲ ἁπλῆν μὲν πρᾶξιν ἧς γενομένης ὥσπερ ὥρισται, συνεχὴς ἦ μία ἄνευ περιπετείας ἢ ἀναγνωρισμοῦ μεταβάσεως γίνεται. Πεπλεγμένην δὲ, ἐξ ἧς μετὰ ἀναγνωρισμοῦ, ἢ περιπετείας, ἢ ἀμφοῖν ἡ μετάβασις ἐστι. Poet. c. 17.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

That the Action *ought to be a* Whole.

THis Proposition seems contrary to what *Aristotle* teaches us, when he says, " * " That the War of *Troy* is a just and perfect " *Whole*; That *Homer* has taken but a Part of " it; That therein he was very Judicious; and " that those who instead of Imitating him, " have taken this *Whole* for the Subject of " their Poems, have taken too much Matter, " and have been very indifferent Artists." Does he pretend by this Doctrine, and by these Instances to overthrow what we have cited out of that very Treatise of Poetry? Would he teach us that the Subject and *Matter* of a Poem ought not to be a *Whole*, *and an Entire and Compleat Action*, but only a Part of an Action? Sure 'tis not likely he should contradict himself thus.

We may reconcile this, that appears so contradictory in the Terms, by making this Reflection: That one and the same Action may be consider'd as in the Fable, where the Poet

* Μηδὲ τὸ πόλεμον καὶ πὲρ ἔχοντα ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος, ἐπιχειρῆσαι ποιεῖν ὅλον· νῦν δὲ ἓν μέρος ἀπολαβών. Arist. Poet. c. 23.

makes

makes uſe of it; or elſe as in the Hiſtory, whence he took it. When the Poet is upon the ſearch after *Matter* for his Fable he lights upon ſeveral ſorts of Actions. Some have ſeveral Parts which may be regularly connected in one Body; and then he may take one of theſe Actions, entire as it is. But there are others whoſe parts are ſo independent to one another, that a Man cannot with any Probability joyn them together ſo as they ſhall ſeem to be the Cauſes and the Conſequences of each other. And this is what *Ariſtotle* condemns under the Name of Many-limb'd Fables. To which he oppoſes thoſe which have but one only Part.

He does not abſolutely forbid the Multiplicity of Parts; but he commonly takes ſuch Sorts of Words in the worſt Senſe, which might of themſelves be underſtood in a more favourable one. Thus we obſerv'd, that he condemned the vicious Plurality of Fables and *Epiſodes*, under the Terms of *Polymythia*, and *Epiſodical*, altho' a Man may lawfully put ſeveral *Fables* into a Poem, and there is none but has ſeveral *Epiſodes* in it.

Therefore 'tis in this Senſe that he condemns the Plurality of the Parts in an *Epick Action*. We are not to ſuppoſe that he condemns it abſolutely, and that this Action made uſe of cannot be a *Whole*. He explains his own Meaning ſufficiently in the following Words.

* *As*, says he, *in other Imitations, that which a Man Imitates is one single Thing: So likewise, The Fable being the Imitation of an Action, 'tis requisite that this Action be One, Entire, and a Whole, and that the Parts be so joyn'd to, and dependent on each other, that one cannot so much as remove any one out of its Place, either to transpose, or retrench it quite, without making a Change in the whole. For whatever can be so placed or omitted, that one cannot perceive the Alteration, can by no means be a Part of the Action.* So then, 'tis only the Plurality of Parts in this last Sense which *Aristotle* condemns. And he has commended *Homer* for having taken only a Part of all that passed in the *Trojan* War.

But yet we are to take special Notice that this Retrenchment of all the other Parts does not hinder the Anger of *Achilles*, which is only retain'd, from being a *Whole* in the Poem. 'Tis only a Part with respect to the whole War, and in the History whence *Homer* took it: But 'tis an Entire and Compleat *Whole* in the

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* Χρὴ ἓν καθάπερ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις μιμητικαῖς ἡ μία μίμησις ἑνός ἐστιν, οὕτω καὶ τὸν μῦθον ἐπεὶ πράξεως μίμησίς ἐστι, μιᾶς τε εἶναι καὶ ταύτης ὅλης, καὶ τὰ μέρη συνεστάναι τῶν πραγμάτων οὕτως ὥστε μετατεθεμένου ἢ ἀφαιρουμένου καὶ κινοῦντα τὸ ὅλον· ὃ γὰρ προσὸν ἢ μὴ προσὸν μηδὲν ποιεῖ ἐπίδηλον ὄντε καὶ μόριον τοῦ ὅλου. Poet. c. 8.

Fable

Fable and Poem, which *Homer* has made of it. You ſee then how theſe oppoſite Expreſſions of *Ariſtotle* are eaſily reconciled in their Meaning. The Poet may take out of Hiſtory an entire Action, or but a Part of one: But ſtill he muſt put in his Poem an entire Action, and not a Part only. The Diſpoſition of his Matter regulates this Point, and makes a regular *Whole* of whatever he ſhall have met with and made choice of. He muſt make uſe thereof variouſly, according to the Hiſtorical Plurality, or Singularity of the Parts, ſo as to make thereof the Subject of his Poem.

When he takes an entire Action, as *Homer* has done for his *Odyſſeis*, and *Virgil* for the *Æneid*; there is nothing to be adjuſted, nor any meaſure to be taken to make this Action appear a *Whole*, and not the Part of another Action. The Reader is already inſtructed by Hiſtory, and is in little danger of being miſtaken therein. 'Tis enough that the Poet tell wherein his Action conſiſts, without ſaying wherein it does not. *Homer* propoſes the Return of *Ulyſſes*, who after the Deſtruction of *Troy*, came back again to his own Country: *Virgil* propoſes the Change of a State which is ruin'd at *Troy*, and re-eſtabliſh'd in *Italy* by *Æneas*. Each of theſe Adventures have the Conditions of a *Whole* as well in the Hiſtory whence they were taken, as in the Fables where they are made uſe of.

But when the Poet chuſes only a Part, and out of this Hiſtorical Part makes a *Whole* in his Fable;

Fable; he muſt take care to give his Readers Notice of it for fear that they, applying the Knowledge they have of the Hiſtory to what they read in the Poem, ſhould blame the Author, as if he had ſaid but little on his Subject, or rather had ill managed his Deſign, having only deſcribed an imperfect Action.

The Poet's not knowing how to change a Part into a *Whole*, has perhaps contributed very much to the Fault of thoſe Men, whom *Ariſtotle* blames for having loaded themſelves with too much Matter. But, the Knowledge *Homer* had of this Secret, and his Skill in practiſing it, has made him merit thoſe Praiſes which *Ariſtotle* gives him. He does not only tell us in his *Iliad* that the Anger of *Achilles* is his Subject; but beſides that, in expreſs Words he excludes the other Parts of the *Trojan* War. To do this after a Poetical and more Artificial Manner, he makes uſe of the very Heroe's Perſon, whoſe Action and Deſign he Sings. * *I am not come hither* (ſays *Achilles*) *to wage War againſt the* Trojans; *I have nothing to do with them, they have done me no Wrong: My Deſign was to maintain the Honour of* Agamemnon *and* Manelaus. *But ſince* Agamemnon *offers an Injury to my Honour, I renounce that Deſign, and ſhall only take care to revenge my ſelf*, &c. You may

* Οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ Τρώων ἕνεκ' ἦλυθον ἀιχμητάων
Δεῦρο μαχησόμενος, &c. Iliad. 1.

ſee

ſee by this what is the Deſign of the *Iliad*, and what is not.

Beſides, the Poet has given neither a *Beginning* nor an *End* to the *Siege of* Troy: Nay there is ſcarce a *Middle* that is proper to it. For tho' *Jupiter* ſends *Agamemnon* to Aſſault the Town, yet 'tis not with a Deſign it ſhould be taken, as this abuſed Prince imagin'd: But only to be puniſh'd by the *Trojan* Arms for the Affront he had put upon *Achilles*, and to ſatisfie the Anger, and the Revenge of this Heroe.

On the other hand, all the Parts of this Anger, that are requiſite to make it a Whole, are very Conſpicuous. It has its *Beginning*, its Cauſes, its Effects, and its *End*. This is what the Poet continues to make out as he had begun; that is, in the Perſon of his Heroe. *Achilles* is not reconcil'd with *Agamemnon* with a Deſign to revenge all *Greece* upon *Troy*, or *Menelaus* upon *Paris*: As long as nothing elſe was on foot he was inexorable. But *Hector* kills *Patroclus*; then he is reconcil'd, that he may revenge his own particular Injury upon *Hector* alone. Tho' he is the Death of other *Trojans*, yet 'tis only becauſe he meets not with *Hector* himſelf: 'Tis to fight his Way through to this particular Enemy; 'tis becauſe thoſe he kills are his Relations, or his Soldiers; juſt as before he reveng'd himſelf on all the *Grecians*, for the Affront which *Agamemnon* alone had put upon him.

As

As soon as he could meet with *Hector*, he * charges all the other *Greeks* to stand off, and would not let them interpose their Quarrel with his. After he had kill'd him, he never pushes on the Advantage which *Hector*'s Death had given him over the *Trojans*, who were stupified at this Disaster, and dejected at so great a Loss. He had nothing more to say to 'em, called off the *Grecians* to the Obsequies of *Patroclus*, and vents the rest of his Fury by insulting over the dead Corps of his Enemy.

Lastly, being mov'd at *Priam*'s Tears, he restores the Body to him, and grants him a Truce for twelve Days to perform the Funeral Solemnities. And that we might not look upon the Death of *Hector* as the End of the War; the Poet is so far from making the least shew of the *Trojans* being inclin'd to a Peace, or a Surrender, that he makes *Priam* say expressly, † *That when the Truce was over, they would be for fighting again upon the Twelfth Day.* If this Twelfth Day had come, and a Battle ensu'd, then the Anger and the particular Interest of *Achilles* being at an End, these Battles would have been really a Part of the

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* Λαοῖσι δ' ἀνέτησε, καρήατα δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς. Οὐδ' ἐᾶ ἔμεναι ἐπὶ Ἕκτορα πηρὰ βέλεμνα. Iliad.

† Τῇ δὲ δυωδεκάτῃ πολεμίζομεν. Iliad. 24.

Trojan

Trojan War, and of the Common Cauſe. * *Homer* to prevent this Irregularity has finiſh'd his Poem together with the Truce and the Funeral of *Hector*, before the Fight or the Skirmiſhes were renew'd.

Could there be any greater Demonſtration, that the *Trojan War* had nothing to do with all this, and that the Subject of this Poem is not a Part of this War in the *Iliad*: But that 'tis a *Whole*, *Entire*, and *Compleat Action*, that has no dependance on the taking of this City?

To conclude, we muſt not confound the Action with the Fable; nor the Deſign of the Heroe in the Action he does, with the Deſign of the Poet in the Allegory, and in the Moral he teaches. 'Tis well known that a *Wolf* devouring a *Lamb* has no deſign to give us the Inſtructions which *Æſop* has drawn from it.

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* Ὡς οἵ γ' ἀμφὶ πον πάφον Ἕκτορ ἱπποδάμοιο. Lin. ult. Poemat.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Beginning, Middle, and End of the Action.

THE Poet ſhould ſo begin his Action, that on one hand nothing ſhould be farther wanting for the underſtanding of what one reads; and on the other hand, that what we read require after it a neceſſary Conſequence. He ſhould end after the ſame manner, with theſe two Conditions tranſpoſed; the One, that nothing more be expected; and the Other, that what is put at the End of the Action be only a neceſſary Conſequence of ſome thing which ought to have went before. Laſtly, the *Beginning* muſt be joined to the *End* by a *Middle* that makes no Interval, but which is in it ſelf neither the *Beginning* nor the *End*. This *Middle* muſt be the Effect of ſomething that went before, and the Cauſe of ſome other Thing that is to come after.

* This makes three Parts, each of which taken ſingly is imperfect, and always ſuppoſes

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* Ὅλον δέ ἐστι τὸ ἔχον ἀρχὴν, καὶ μέσον, καὶ τελευτήν. Ἀρχὴ μὲν ἐστιν ὃ αὐτὸ μὲν οὐκ ἀνάγκης μὴ μετ' ἄλλο ἐστὶ, μετ' ἐκεῖνο δὲ ἕτερόν πέφυκεν εἶναι ἢ γενέσθαι. Τελευτὴ δὲ τοιαύτη ἐστὶν, ὃ αὐτὸ μετ' ἄλλο πέφυκεν εἶναι, ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης, ἢ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο ἄλλο οὐδέν. Μέσον δὲ καὶ αὐτὸ μετ' ἄλλο, καὶ μετ' ἐκεῖνο ἕτερον. Arist. Poet. c. 7.

One

One or both of the Other. The *Beginning* ſuppoſes nothing before it ſelf, and requires ſomething after it: On the contrary, the *End* requires nothing after it ſelf, but ſuppoſes ſomething that goes before: And the *Middle* ſuppoſes ſomething that went before, and requires ſomething to follow after. We will explain this Doctrine of *Ariſtotle* by the Inſtances we produced.

Eteocles and *Polynices* were equally the Sons and Heirs of *Oedipus* King of *Thebes*. They made a Contract to Reign a Year by turns. *Eteocles* began, and, his Year expired, refuſes to quit his Throne to his Bother. *Polynices* meets with Aſſiſtance at *Argos*, and comes to diſpute his Title at the Head of an Army. This is an exact Beginning. It requires a Conſequence, but not any thing Antecedent thereto. Therefore 'twas irregularly done to place before this *Beginning* the Recital of whatever happened from the founding of *Thebes*, and the Rape of *Europa* down to that Time.

The Quarrel of theſe two Brothers ended with their Deaths: Which is an exact *End*? The Reader does not deſire one ſhould relate what becomes of *Creon* the Succeſſor of *Eteocles*. Therefore *Statius* is in the wrong, when he makes *That* a Part of his Poem.

He was no leſs to blame for putting in the *Middle* of his Poem the Story of *Hypſipyle*. For this Narration has no dependance on the *Theban Action*, and ſuppoſes nothing before

it, and requires nothing after it; and by Conſequence this Action is neither the *Middle*, nor any other Part of the Quarrel between the two Brothers, or of the Subject of the Poem. Theſe are Examples to be avoided; now we will produce ſuch as are to be imitated.

Homer's Deſign in the *Iliad* is to relate the Anger and Revenge of *Achilles*. The *Beginning* of this Action is the Change of *Achilles* from a Calm to a Paſſionate Temper. The *Middle* is the Effects of his Paſſion, and all the Illuſtrious Deaths it is the Cauſe of. The *End* of this ſame Action is the Return of *Achilles* to his Calmneſs of Temper again. All was quiet in the *Grecian* Camp, when *Agamemnon* their General provokes *Apollo* againſt them, whom he was willing to appeaſe afterwards at the Coſt and Prejudice of *Achilles*, who had nothing to do with his Fault. This then is an exact *Beginning*; it ſuppoſes nothing before, and requires after it the Effects of this Anger. *Achilles* revenges himſelf, and that is an exact *Middle*; it ſuppoſes before the *Beginning* of the Anger of *Achilles*, who is provoked. This Revenge is the Effect of it. Then this *Middle* requires after it the Effect of this Revenge, which is the Satisfaction of *Achilles*; for the Revenge had not been compleat, unleſs *Achilles* had been ſatisfied. By this means the Poet makes his Heroe, after he was glutted, as I may ſo ſay, by the Miſchief he had done to *Agamemnon*, by the Death of *Hector*, and the Honour he did his Friend,

Friend, by insulting o'er his Murderer; he makes him, I say, to be moved by the Tears and Misfortunes of King *Priam*. We see him as calm at the *End* of the Poem, during the Funeral of *Hector*, as he was at the *Beginning* of the Poem, whilst the Plague raged among the *Grecians*. This *End* is just, since the Calmness of Temper *Achilles* re-enjoy'd, is only an Effect of the Revenge which ought to have went before; and after this no Body expects any more of his Anger. Thus has *Homer* been very exact in the *Beginning*, *Middle*, and *End* of the Action he made Choice of for the Subject of his *Iliad*.

His Design in the *Odysseis* was to describe the Return of *Ulysses* from the Ruin of *Troy*, and his Arrival at *Ithaca*. He opens this Poem with the Complaints of *Minerva* against *Neptune*, who opposed the Return of this Heroe, and against *Calypso*, who detained him in an Island far from *Ithaca*. Is this a *Beginning*? No; doubtless 'tis not. The Reader would fain know why *Neptune* is displeased with *Ulysses*, and how this Prince came to be with *Calypso*. He has a Mind to know how he came from *Troy* thither. The Poet answers his Demands out of the Mouth of *Ulysses* himself, who relates these Things, and begins the Action by the recital of his Travels from the City of *Troy*. It signifies little whether the *Beginning* of the Action be the *Beginning* of the Poem, as we shall take notice

in the following Book, where we ſhall treat expreſsly of the Order our Poets have obſerved in their Narrations. The *Beginning* of this Action then is that which happens to *Ulyſſes*, when upon his leaving of *Troy* he bends his Courſe for *Ithaca*. The *Middle* comprehends all the Misfortunes he endured, and all the Diſorders of his own Government. The *End* is the re-inſtating of this Heroe in the peaceable Poſſeſſion of his Kingdom, where he diſcovers himſelf to his Son, his Wife, his Father, and ſeveral others. The Poet was ſenſible he ſhould have ended ill, had he went no farther than the Death of theſe Princes, who were the Rivals and Enemies of *Ulyſſes*, becauſe the Reader might have looked for ſome Revenge which the Subjects of theſe Princes might have taken on him, who had kill'd their Sovereigns: But this Danger over, and theſe People vanquiſhed and quieted, there was nothing more to be expected. The Poem and the Action have all their Parts and no more.

The Order of the *Odyſſeis* differs from that of the *Iliad*, in that the Poem does not begin with the *Beginning* of the Action. That of the *Æneid* is ſtill more different, ſince the very *End* of the Poem is not the *End* of the Action of *Æneas*. But we ſhall ſay no more of this at preſent.

The Deſign of *Virgil* is to conduct *Æneas* into *Italy*, there to eſtabliſh his Gods and Religion,

ligion, and lay the Foundations of the *Roman Empire.* There is this Difference between the Return of *Ulyſſes*, and the Voyage of *Æneas*, that no one ever queſtions why a Man returns to his own Country: Though *Homer* had made no mention of the natural Affection he bore to his Country, yet the Readers would never have fell out with him for this Omiſſion. This is a well known Cauſe; 'tis neither an Action, of which one ought to make a Narration, nor a Thing which preceeds this Return. But *Æneas* acts contrary to this natural Affection; he abandons his own Country, to go in ſearch after a ſtrange Land. The Reader then would have the Poet tell him why this Heroe leaves *Troy.* Beſides *Ulyſſes* was born a King, but *Æneas* was not. So that the embarking of *Ulyſſes* is ſufficiently the *Beginning* of the *Odyſſeis*: But the embarking of *Æneas* from *Troy*, on Board the Admiral of a Fleet of Twenty Sail, cannot be the *Beginning* of the Action of *Æneas*. *Æneas* abandons *Troy*, becauſe it was taken by the *Greeks*: And is King of the *Trojans*, becauſe *Priam* was dead, and he elected in his Room.

But if the taking of *Troy* be the Conſequence of a ten Year's Siege, ſhould not this War have been related as the neceſſary Cauſe of the taking and ruine thereof? This is what the Poet has admirably provided for by bringing it about, that neither the War, nor the long and tedious Siege, ſhould be the Cauſe of

the taking of this City. * Therefore he ſays at firſt, that the *Greeks* were worſted, that they utterly deſpaired of being Maſters of the City by any of thoſe Meaſures they had hitherto taken; and that ſo many Years ſpent in the War was but ſo much Time loſt. So that the Taking of *Troy* depends not upon any Thing that went before. The *Greeks* form another Deſign, which is an exact *Beginning* of an Action; for it ſuppoſes nothing before it. The Poet gives it likewiſe the other Qualification of a *Beginning*, which is the requiring Something after it. Before ever the *Grecians* became Maſters of the City, and before ever King *Priam* was kill'd, *Æneas* is deſtin'd to re-eſtabliſh a more noble Religion, and a more illuſtrious Empire elſewhere. Wherefore the Burning of *Troy* is not an entire Action, nor the Downfal of an Empire, but the Cauſe and the firſt Part of the Alteration of a State; and it requires a new Eſtabliſhment to ſucceed it.

The Shipping off of *Æneas*, his Voyages, his Battels, and all the Obſtacles he met with, compoſe a juſt *Middle*; they are a Conſequence of the Deſtruction of *Troy*, and of the Choice they made of him to tranſport them into *Italy*; and theſe ſame Incidents require an *End*.

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* Fracti bello, fatiſque repulſi Ductores Danaum tot jam labentibus annis. *Æneid. l.* 2.

The

The *End* comprehends the Death of *Amata*, that of *Turnus*, the Change of *Juno*'s Mind, and the Terms of the Peace, which contain'd all that *Æneas* pretended to for his Eſtabliſhment.

But for the better judging of the *Unity* and *Integrity* of the Action (of which we have already ſpoke) we muſt add, that there are two Sorts of Deſigns: The firſt Sort have no manner of Conſequence, but end with the Action; the others, beſide the Action, have likewiſe ſome neceſſary Conſequences: And in this laſt Caſe theſe Conſequences muſt be related, if one would have the Poem be as *Entire* and as *Compleat* as it ought to be. Our Poets furniſh us with Inſtances of both theſe Deſigns.

The Anger and Revenge of a Man requires neceſſarily nothing more after it: When it is ſatisfied and over, all is at an end. When *Achilles* was reveng'd, when he had receiv'd Satisfaction for the Affront put upon him, and when he was once quiet, a Man never enquires what becomes of him afterwards. 'Tis the ſame Caſe with the Return of a Prince into his own Country: When he is come thither, has put an End to thoſe Diſorders which his Abſence had cauſed, and enjoys Peace again, the Reader is ſatisfied. Nor has *Homer* made any *Epiſode* that has tranſgreſſed theſe Bounds.

Virgil's Practice has been otherwiſe, becauſe he undertook a Deſign of another Nature. The Eſtabliſhment of any State does of Neceſſity draw great Conſequences after it. If the

Poet had taken them for all his Action, it would have been of a monſtrous Extent, becauſe the *Roman* Government was not fully ſettled till after the Ruin of *Carthage*, which had ſo long diſputed with it for Empire and Liberty: And this very State arrived not to its Grandour and Perfection till under *Auguſtus*, who was its laſt, as *Æneas* was its firſt, Founder. Therefore *Virgil* has not taken this for the *Matter* of his Poem; but * he relates it by ſuch Recitals as *Homer* makes uſe of in his *Odyſſeis*, when he tells us of the Wound *Ulyſſes* receiv'd on the Top of *Parnaſſus*. Upon this Account we obſerved, that the Poet may relate ſuch Incidents as were neceſſary to the *Matter* of his Poem, but which notwithſtanding were not the Matter thereof. 'Tis thus that *Virgil* practiſes in the Machines, making *Jupiter* in the firſt, and *Anchiſes* in the ſixth Book, to make theſe Prophetical Recitals.

There is ſomething ſtill more Noble in the *Epiſode* of *Dido*, where by an Allegory and a Conduct, which one can never ſufficiently admire, he brings into the Body of his Action all the ſucceeding Hiſtory of *Carthage*; and this ſo naturally too, that one would think the Poet ſhould have made *Dido* ſay and act, juſt as ſhe did, though there had never been any

* Super & Garamantas & Indos Proferet Imperium; jacet ex via Sydera tellus, *&c.* *Æn.* 6.

Quar-

Quarrel between these two States, and though there had never been such a Man as *Hannibal.*

CHAP. XII.

Of the Causes of the Action.

AN Historian does not make his Subject-Matter himself, he speaks nothing but what he knows; and in the Conduct of a State, we often see Effects, whose *Causes* are never known. Those who act in it, keep all Things in private; and the more they do so, the greater * Politicians are they accounted. So that on one side the Historian is obliged to declare all the *Causes* he knows, because these Circumstances are very instructive: But on the other hand, he is justly dispensed from relating several *Causes*, because he cannot come to any Knowledge of them.

A Poet has the same Reasons to tell all the *Causes* of his Action, and he is likewise more oblig'd to it than an Historian, since 'tis more proper and essential for Poetry to instruct, than 'tis for History. But the Poet has not the same Reasons to excuse his Omission of any *Cause*

* Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare.

whatever. He makes his *Matter* himſelf, and if he takes any thing from Hiſtory, 'tis but ſo far as Hiſtory ſuits thereto. He muſt feign whatever is not there, or elſe change what is not ſuited to his Purpoſe. If 'tis probable that ſome Things may lie concealed from him, becauſe no Man can know every thing; he then is inſtructed by the Gods who do know every thing. *Virgil* is my Warrant in the Caſe before us, * he invokes a Deity, that he may come to the Knowledge of the *Cauſes* of his Action: And he relates ſuch Things, as he could never know but by Revelation; ſince he ſays they happen'd to *Dido* alone, and which ſhe never made any one, no not ſo much as her Siſter, acquainted with. Thus is the Poet oblig'd to tell all the *Cauſes* not only that he may inſtruct, as we hinted before, but likewiſe that he may pleaſe; for without doubt this is very grateful.

There are three Sorts of *Cauſes*; ſome are more general and undetermin'd, ſuch as the *Humours* of any one; for 'tis upon Humour that every one commonly regulates his Conduct, and acts upon Occaſion. Others are more preciſe, ſuch as the *Intereſts* of thoſe that Act. And laſtly, there are others which are more immediate, ſuch as the *Deſigns* which one takes to promote or hinder any thing. Theſe different *Cauſes* of an Action are likewiſe fre-

* Muſa, mihi cauſas memora. *Æneid.* 1.

quently

quently the *Causes* of one another: Every one taking up those *Interests*, which his *Humour* engages him in, and forming such *Designs* as his *Humour* and *Interest* prompt him to.

The *Humours* and the Inclinations belong to the Doctrine of the *Morals*, which we shall treat of particularly in the fourth Book. We only joyn them here to the two other *Causes* we mention'd; and of all three we affirm this in general, That the Poet ought to inform his Readers of them, and make them Conspicuous in his principal Personages, when he introduces them, or even before he makes them appear.

Homer has ingeniously begun his *Odysseis* with the Transactions at *Ithaca* during the Absence of *Ulysses*. If he had begun with the Travels of his Heroe, he would scarce have spoken of any one else, and a Man might have read a great deal of the Poem without conceiving the least Idea of *Telemachus*, *Penelope*, or her Suitors, who had so great a Share in the Action. But in the *Beginning* he has pitch'd upon, besides these Personages, whom he discovers, he represents *Ulysses* in his full Length. And from the very first Opening of the Action, one sees the *Interest* which the Gods had therein.

The Skill and Care of the same Poet may be seen likewise in introducing his Personages in the first Book of his *Iliad*; where he discovers the *Humour*, the *Interests*, and the *Designs*

ſigns of *Agamemnon*, *Achilles*, *Neſtor*, *Ulyſſes*, and ſeveral others, nay, and of the Gods too. And in his ſecond Book he makes a Review of the *Grecian* and *Trojan* Armies; which is full Evidence, that all we have here ſaid is very Neceſſary.

But laſtly, ſince the *Epick Poem* is doubtleſs much longer than the *Dramatick*; and ſince 'tis eaſier to manage the Incidents and the Preſence of the Perſonages in that than in the other: One is not obliged to introduce all of them at the *Beginning* of the *Epopéa* with as much Exactneſs, as in the firſt Act of a *Theatral Piece*, where at leaſt one is obliged to give ſome Item of all thoſe who have any conſiderable Part in the *Intrigue*.

I mention this upon the Account of *Virgil*'s Practice. He has been leſs exact than the *Greek* Poet; for he ſays nothing of *Turnus*, *Latinus*, *Amata*, and other *Italians*, till the middle of his Poem. But 'tis true likewiſe, that he has ſo diſpoſed his Action as ſeems to juſtifie this Delay. He has divided the *Æneid* into two Parts more ſenſibly than *Homer* has his *Iliad* and *Odyſſeis*. He not only makes this Diviſion at the firſt, and in his Propoſition, by ſaying that * "*Æneas* ſuffer'd much "when he was toſs'd about from this Sea to "that, and from one Province to another;

* Multum ille & terris jactatus & alto: Multa quoque & bello paſſus. *Æneid.* 1.

"and

"and ſuffer'd alſo a great deal more in the "Wars he was engag'd in:" But he likewiſe, when he begins his ſecond Part, advertiſes his Reader of it, and * propoſes the Things he is about to mention, as all new, and quite of another Make from the former. Thus in the firſt Book he introduces the principal Perſonages of his firſt Part; and he only ſpeaks of thoſe, who were to appear afreſh in the ſecond Part, in his ſixth, ſeventh, and eighth Books. And here, in my Mind, he was leſs fortunate than the *Greek* Poet.

Beſides theſe more general *Cauſes* of the Action and of the main *Intrigues*; there are ſtill ſome Incidents, and ſome *Epiſodes* more particular, of which the Poet muſt give an Account. This happens commonly not in the *Beginning* of the Action, but only when the Poet is about to make one of his leſſer Recitals. The Reader could not gueſs, how the Wound of *Ulyſſes* came, which diſcover'd him to his Friends; nor why *Camilla* ſhould be in love with War; nor how it came to paſs that *Æneas* met with ſeveral Perſons in the Shades below, who were to come into the World many Ages after, *&c.* Therefore the Poet muſt tell him the *Cauſes* of all this.

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* Major rerum mihi naſcitur ordo, Majus opus moveo. *Æneid.* 8.

Theſe

Theſe *Cauſes* muſt be good, and ſuitable to the Subject. All the Action of the *Iliad* is founded upon the Anger of *Achilles*. The *Cauſe* of this Anger is the Diſpleaſure *Apollo* conceiv'd againſt *Agamemnon*; becauſe *Agamemnon* likewiſe in his Anger had affronted the Prieſt of this God. All theſe Paſſions have probable *Cauſes*, and ſuch as are ſuitable to the General Subject of the *Trojan* War. For as this *General Cauſe* is *Helen*'s being raviſh'd from *Menelaus*; ſo the other *Cauſes* are of the ſame Nature. *Chryſeis* is raviſh'd from her Father, and *Briſeis* from *Achilles*. In ſhort, all are ſtamp'd with the ſame Character of Injuſtice and Violence in theſe Heroes.

If the Heroe be a Man of Probity, the *Cauſes* of all his Deſigns ſhould be juſt and commendable, as thoſe in the *Odyſſeis* and the *Æneid*: And the *Cauſes* of the Perſecution he meets with, muſt not leſſen the Eſteem which the Poet would raiſe of his Probity. *Neptune* perſecutes *Ulyſſes*, becauſe *Ulyſſes* had blinded his Son *Polypheme*. But this Monſter had already devour'd ſix of the Comerades of *Ulyſſes*, and was juſt upon ſerving *Ulyſſes* himſelf and the reſt the ſame Trick. *Æneas* makes a more particular Profeſſion of his Piety, and accordingly *Virgil* uſes him more honourably. The *Cauſes Juno* had to perſecute him, did either not touch his Perſon, or elſe were much to his Glory; ſince the only one which concern'd him, was the Choice which Fate made of him to lay in *Italy* the Foundation

tion of the Empire of the World. * *Juno* is ſo far from having any ſcornful or hateful Thoughts for this Heroe's Perſon, that ſhe was willing to truſt him with all that was moſt dear to her on Earth, and make him Lord over her own *Carthage*. She could never have given a more conſiderable Token of her Love and Eſteem for any Man.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Intrigue, and the Unravelling thereof.

IN what was ſaid about the *Cauſes* of the Action, one might have obſerv'd two oppoſite Deſigns. The firſt and moſt principal is that of the Heroe: The ſecond comprehends all their Deſigns, that oppoſe the Pretenſions of the Heroe. Theſe Oppoſite *Cauſes* produce likewiſe Oppoſite Effects; *viz.* the Endeavours of the Heroe for the accompliſhing his Deſign, and the Endeavours of thoſe who are againſt it. As theſe *Cauſes* and Deſigns are the *Beginning* of the Action; ſo theſe contrary Endeavours are the *Middle* of it, and form a

* Liceat Phrygio ſervire marito, Dotaliſque tuæ Tyrios permittere dextræ. *Æn.* 4.

Diffi-

Difficulty and *Intrigue*, which makes up the greatest Part of the Poem. It lasts as long as the Reader's Mind is in suspense about the Event of these contrary Endeavours. The Solution or the *Unravelling* begins, when one begins to see the Difficulty remov'd, and the Doubts clear'd up.

Our Poets have divided each of their three Poems into two Parts, and have put a particular *intrigue*, and the *Solution* of it in each Part.

The first Part of the *Iliad* is the Anger of *Achilles*, who is for revenging himself upon *Agamemnon*, by the means of *Hector* and the *Trojans*. The *Intrigue* comprehends the three Days Fight which happen'd in the Absence of *Achilles*: And it consists on one side in the Resistance of *Agamemnon* and the *Grecians*; and on the other, in the revengeful and inexorable Humour of *Achilles*, which would not suffer him to be reconcil'd. The Loss of the *Grecians*, and the Despair of *Agamemnon*, prepare for a *Solution* by the Satisfaction which the incens'd Heroe receiv'd from it. The Death of *Patroclus* joyn'd to the Offers of *Agamemnon*, which alone had proved ineffectual, remove this Difficulty, and make the Unravelling of the first Part.

This Death is likewise the *Beginning* of the second Part; since it puts *Achilles* upon the Design of revenging himself on *Hector*. But the Design of *Hector* is opposite to that of *Achilles*: This *Trojan* Heroe is Valiant, and re-

reſolved to ſtand in his own Defence. This Valour and Reſolution of *Hector*, are on his Account the *Cauſe* of the *Intrigue*. All the Endeavours *Achilles* uſed to meet with *Hector*, and be the Death of him; and the contrary Endeavours of the *Trojan* to keep out of his Reach and defend himſelf, are the *Intrigue*: Which comprehends the Battel of the laſt Day. The *Unravelling* begins at the Death of *Hector*; and beſides that, it contains the inſulting of *Achilles* over his Body, the Honours he paid to *Patroclus*, and the Intreaties of King *Priam*. The Regrets of this King, and the other *Trojans* in the ſorrowful Obſequies they paid to *Hector*'s Body end the *Unravelling*; they juſtifie the Satisfaction of *Achilles*, and demonſtrate his Tranquillity.

The firſt Part of the *Odyſſeis* is the Return of *Ulyſſes* into *Ithaca*. *Neptune* oppoſes it by raiſing Tempeſts, and this makes the *Intrigue*. The *Unravelling* is the Arrival of *Ulyſſes* upon his own Iſland, where *Neptune* could offer him no further Injury. The ſecond Part, is the re-inſtating this Heroe in his own Government. The Princes, that are his Rivals, oppoſe him, and this is a freſh *Intrigue*. The *Solution* thereof begins at their Deaths, and is compleated as ſoon as the *Ithacans* were appeaſed.

Theſe two Parts in the *Odyſſeis* have not one common *Intrigue*, as is to be obſerved in the two other Poems. The Anger of *Achilles* forms both the *Intrigues* in the *Iliad*; and

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it is ſo far the *Matter* of this *Epopéa*, that the very *Beginning* and *End* of this Poem depend on the *Beginning* and *End* of this Anger. But let the Deſire *Achilles* had to revenge himſelf, and the Deſire *Ulyſſes* had to return to his own Country be never ſo near a-kin; yet we cannot place them under one and the ſame Notion: For the Love of *Ulyſſes* is not a Paſſion that Begins and Ends in the Poem with the Action; 'tis a natural Habit, nor does the Poet propoſe it for his Subject, as he does the Anger of *Achilles*.

Virgil has divided his Poem as *Homer* did his *Odyſſeis*. The firſt Part is the Voyage and Arrival of *Æneas* in *Italy*; the ſecond is his Eſtabliſhment there. But he has connected theſe two great *Epiſodes* better by giving them a Common *Intrigue*. He did not take for his firſt *Intrigue* a Deity, who could act no where but by Sea, as *Neptune*: But * makes Choice of *Juno*, the Goddeſs of the Air, who had an equal Power over Sea and Land. She oppoſed the Voyage of this Heroe, and 'tis ſhe likewiſe that oppoſes his Settlement. This Oppoſition then is the General *Intrigue* of the whole Action. The *Solution* is over when † *Juno* is appeas'd by *Jupiter*.

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* Nec Teneris addita Juno Unquam aberit. *Æneid.* 6.

† Annuit his Juno & mentem lætata retorſit. *Æneid.* 12.

The

The principal *Intrigue* of the first Part, is the Design of *Dido*, and the Endeavours she used to keep *Æneas* still at *Carthage*. The Complaints of *Iarbas*, the Orders *Mercury* brought *Æneas* to be gone, and the refitting of the *Trojan Fleet*, are Preparations for the *Unravelling*, which begins at the Departure of *Æneas*, when he * cut the Cables which held his Ships at Anchor.

Dido might have done more Mischief to *Æneas*, either by pursuing him as an Enemy to be reveng'd on him, or by following him as his Wife. And though she stay'd still at *Africk*, whatever Liberty Men had in those Days of putting away one Wife and marrying another, yet the Poet had made him too honest a Man than to allow him two Wives living at the same time. Let Cases stand how they would, yet *Æneas* had Reason to be afraid of *Dido*, and to apply the Prophecy of *Sibyl* to himself, † which said, that the Cause of the Misfortunes he was to suffer should be another foreign Wife, that should entertain the *Trojans*, and be ravish'd from another Man's Bed. Upon this Account she must needs die, and *Æneas* be certified of her Death. So that this *Unravelling* is not compleat till

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* Vaginaque eripit ensem Fulmineum, strictoque ferit retinacula Ferro. *Æneid.* 4.

† Causa mali tanti conjux iterum hospita Teucris, Externique iterum thalami. *Æneid.* 6.

the

the sixth Book,* where *Æneas* meets with the Ghost of this unhappy Queen in the Shades below.

The *Intrigue* of the second Part is form'd out of the Love and Ambition of *Turnus*, who was countenanc'd by the Authority and Passion of the Queen *Amata*. The Articles of Peace which are propos'd in the Eleventh Book, and which are sworn to in the Twelfth, prepare for the *Unravelling*. The Death of *Amata* begins, and the Death of *Turnus* finishes it.

After what has been said of the principal *Intrigues*, the rest are easily discern'd: There are almost as many as there are great and small *Episodes*.

* Infelix Dido, verus mihi nuncius ergo Venerat extinctam ferroque extrema sequutam. *Æneid.* 6.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

The Way of forming the Plot *or* Intrigue.

WE have already obſerv'd what is meant by the *Intrigue*, and the *Unravelling* thereof; let us now ſay ſomething of the manner of forming both: And this we ſhall meet with in the Practice of our Poets; which tells us that theſe two Things ſhould ariſe naturally out of the very Eſſence and Subject of the Poem, and that they are to be deduced thence. Their Conduct is ſo exact and natural, that it ſeems as if their Action had preſented them with whatever they inſerted therein, without putting themſelves to the Trouble of a farther Enquiry.

What is more Uſual and Proper among Warriours, than Anger, Heat, Paſſion, and Impatience of bearing the leaſt Affronts and Diſreſpects? This is what forms the *Intrigue* of the *Iliad*: And every thing we read there, is nothing elſe but the Effect of this Humour, and theſe Paſſions.

What more Natural and Uſual Obſtacle do they who take Voyages meet with than the Sea, the Winds, and the Storms? *Homer* makes this the *Intrigue* of the firſt Part of the *Odyſſeis*: And for the ſecond, he makes uſe of the almoſt infallible Effect of the long Abſence

sence of a Master, whose Return is quite despair'd of; *viz.* the Insolence of his Servants and Neighbours; the Danger his Son and Wife were in; and the Sequestration of his Estate. Besides, an Absence of almost Twenty Years, and the insupportable Fatigues joyn'd to the Age *Ulysses* was then of, might induce him to believe that he should not be own'd by those that thought him Dead, and whose Interest it was to have him be really so. Therefore if he had presently declar'd who he was, and had call'd himself *Ulysses*, they would easily have made away with him as an Impostor, before he had had Opportunity to make himself known to them.

There could be nothing more Natural, nor more Necessary, than this ingenious Disguise, to which the Advantages which his Enemies had taken of his Absence had reduc'd him, and to which his long Misfortunes had inur'd him. This allow'd him an Opportunity, without hazarding any thing, of taking the best Measures he could against those Persons who could not so much as mistrust any Harm from him. This Way then was afforded him by the very Nature of his Action, that he might execute his Designs, and overcome the mighty Obstacles it presented him with: And 'tis this Contest between the Prudence and the Dissimulation of a single Man on one hand, and the ungovernable Insolence of so many Rivals on the other, which makes up the *Intrigue* of the second Part of the *Odysseis*.

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The Conduct of the *Latin* Poet, in the *Intrigues* he forms, has the ſame Simplicity. The Tempeſts are made uſe of in the firſt Part of the *Æneid*, juſt as in the *Odyſſeis*.

In this very Part of the *Æneid*, *Virgil* ſuits himſelf to the Humour of his Heroe, as *Homer* does himſelf to the Humour of *Achilles*. He (*Achilles* I mean) was teſty and paſſionate, *Agamemnon* provokes him by very ſenſible Affronts. *Æneas* was of a ſoft Diſpoſition; the Poet makes uſe of good Turns, kind Threats, and the moſt melting, moſt endearing Paſſions, to engage him to ſtay at *Carthage*.

In the ſecond Part, the Oppoſitions of *Turnus* and *Mezentius* are no leſs exact. For Love and Reſpect oblig'd *Æneas*, not to abandon a Queen to whom he ow'd ſo much; and theſe oppos'd his Embarking for *Italy*: And the Impiety of *Turnus* and *Mezentius* was an Obſtacle to the Eſtabliſhment of the Gods and Religion at that Place. In fine, the Love *Turnus* had for *Lavinia*, and the Eſteem *Amata* had for this *Italian* Heroe above *Æneas*, are likewiſe other natural Obſtacles, derived from the very Subject; ſince *Amata* was oblig'd to prefer her Relation to an unknown Stranger; and ſuch an accompliſh'd Princeſs as *Lavinia*, who was ſole Heireſs to a Kingdom, could not but have her Suitors.

Beſides, we obſerved that *Homer* made uſe of the Anger of *Apollo*, and that of *Agamemnon*, to ſtir up the ſame Paſſion in *Achilles*;

sence of a Master, whose Return is quite despair'd of; *viz.* the Insolence of his Servants and Neighbours; the Danger his Son and Wife were in; and the Sequestration of his Estate. Besides, an Absence of almost Twenty Years, and the insupportable Fatigues joyn'd to the Age *Ulysses* was then of, might induce him to believe that he should not be own'd by those that thought him Dead, and whose Interest it was to have him be really so. Therefore if he had presently declar'd who he was, and had call'd himself *Ulysses*, they would easily have made away with him as an Impostor, before he had had Opportunity to make himself known to them.

There could be nothing more Natural, nor more Necessary, than this ingenious Disguise, to which the Advantages which his Enemies had taken of his Absence had reduc'd him, and to which his long Misfortunes had inur'd him. This allow'd him an Opportunity, without hazarding any thing, of taking the best Measures he could against those Persons who could not so much as mistrust any Harm from him. This Way then was afforded him by the very Nature of his Action, that he might execute his Designs, and overcome the mighty Obstacles it presented him with: And 'tis this Contest between the Prudence and the Dissimulation of a single Man on one hand, and the ungovernable Insolence of so many Rivals on the other, which makes up the *Intrigue* of the second Part of the *Odysseis*.

The

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les; and that the Cauſe of the War, and the Cauſe of theſe Paſſions, are the Raviſhment of three Women. *Virgil* forms his general *Intrigue* after the ſame manner: He oppoſes to the Eſtabliſhing of a Kingdom in *Italy*, the Eſtabliſhing of another Kingdom in *Africk*. This Oppoſition is ſuited to Policy in general, and to the *Roman* Hiſtory in particular. * *Rome* in its Infancy ſees all her Neighbours conſpiring againſt her; for new Governments caſt always a Shade upon the old ones.

But in theſe Intrigues of the *Æneid*, there are a great many other Circumſtances, wherein *Virgil* makes Allegories and Alluſions ſo correſpondent to Hiſtory and Truth, that without bating any thing of his Quality as Poet, he ſeems to merit likewiſe that of an Hiſtorian. A Man may ſee in the Perſons of *Æneas* and *Dido* the very Spirit and Conduct of two great Empires, of which they are Founders. There one may obſerve the greateſt Obſtacle the *Romans* ever met with: And this great *Intrigue* in the Fable is a Truth in Hiſtory. Was it only Fiction, that there was a Deſign of tranſlating into *Africk* the Empire of the World, which was deſtin'd for *Italy*? And the Means uſed to accompliſh that End, was it not that Treachery with which the *Romans* have always upbraided the *Carthagi-*

* Tantum in medio creſcentem noſtem ſibi ac poſteris ſuis metuebant. *Liv. lib.* 1.

nians?

nians? *Dido* casts this Reproach upon her self; and * makes the Application thereof to *Hannibal* and the *Carthaginians*; ordering them to make use of it always against the *Romans*, and to violate their most solemn Treaties, as oft as they suppos'd they could do it to their own Advantage. This is the Genius and Conduct she inspires her Commonwealth with. *Mercury* likewise advises the Founder of *Rome* not to trust to the Inconstancy of this Woman, which was like the Inconstancy of her City. And when *Juno* made the Proposal to *Venus* of an Alliance between these two States, *Venus* saw well enough 'twas only a Trick of Dissimulation, to which her present Interests compell'd her to condescend. But I am too minute in a General Treatise of the *Epick Poem*. We end all with saying, that the Event is the same both in the History and the Poem. † 'Tis *Dido*'s Breach of Faith that had almost ruin'd *Æneas*, and which at last became the Ruin of this Foundress of *Carthage*. 'Twas this very same Perfidiousness in *Hannibal* that brought *Rome* into so much Danger, and was at last the Ruin of *Hannibal* and his City.

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* Nullus amor populis nec fœdera sunto. Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor, Qui face Dardanios ferroque sequare colonos. *Æneid.* 4.

† Extinxi te meque, soror, populumque patresque Sidonios, urbemque tuam. *Æneid.* 4.

I ſhall conclude this Chapter with the three Methods of forming the *Plot* or *Intrigue* of the Poem. One is, to deduce it from the Deſign of the Heroe and the Action, which we have already taken Notice of. The ſecond is, to deduce it from the Fable and the Deſign of the Poet; and this is what we obſerv'd in the Allegory of two oppoſite Perſons and two oppoſite Empires. The third is to form the *Intrigue* ſo, as that the *Unravelling* may be prepar'd for it. I have ſaid nothing as yet of this third Way, and ſhall explain it by ſome Inſtances.

'Tis worth taking Notice, how the Poet prepares the Departure of *Æneas* from *Dido*. The Heroe does not come deſignedly into *Africk*, but is forced thither againſt his Will by a Storm. He accepts not the Offer * *Dido* made him of her City, if he would ſtay there: † And in the Marriage it ſelf he takes care to engage himſelf to nothing that might hinder him from making a Voyage into *Italy* by the firſt fair Wind. All theſe Precautions prepare the Reader, that ſo without the leaſt Surprize he ſees *Æneas* leave *Carthage*: This is the *Unravelling* of that *Intrigue*.

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* Vultis & his mecum pariter conſidere regnis? Urbem quam ſtatuo, veſtra eſt. *Æneid.* 1.

† Fugæ nec conjugis unquam Prætendi tædas, aut hæc in fœdera veni. *Æneid.* 4.

In

In the ſecond Part the Poet oppoſes none againſt his Heroe, but ſuch Perſons as he could deal well enough with, when a Peace was clap'd up. King *Latinus* was to be his Father-in-Law, *Lavinia* his Wife, and the *Latins* his Subjects. It would have been hard for all theſe Perſons to have become ſuch upon his Account, after they had been his profeſs'd Enemies. The Poet has provided for that too. In *Lavinia* there is not to be obſerv'd either an Inclination for *Turnus*, or an Averſion to *Æneas*: * The King profers this Princeſs his Daughter to the Heroe as an Article of the Peace, and conſtantly perſiſts in this Deſign: The *Latins* only fight againſt *Æneas* becauſe they are forc'd to it. Their Legates give ſuch ample Teſtimonies of their Love and Eſteem for him, † that they declar'd, *they ſhould think it an Honour to build the City for him which he demanded in* Italy. The Poet then oppoſes none againſt him but *Amata* and *Turnus*, who both periſhed by their own Faults.

Juno indeed could not die; but ſhe is well enough diſpoſed of, by inſinuating that all ſhe hopes for, is not abſolutely to hinder the Eſtabliſhment of *Æneas* (for that ſhe confeſſed

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* Multaque ſe incuſat, qui non acceperit ultro Dardanium Æneam, generumque aſciverit urbem. *Æn. lib.* II.

† Quin & fatales murorum arcollere moles; Saxaque ſubvectare humeris Trojana juvabit. *Æn.* I.

ſhe could not do:) * But only to put a ſtop to it a little, and make the *Trojans* and *Italians* pay very dear for it. Thus, having accompliſhed theſe two Deſigns, 'twas no hard Matter for *Jupiter* to chear up her Spirits, and make her conſent to the reſt.

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* At trahere, & tantis moras licet addere rebus, Sanguine Trojano & Rutulo dotabere, Virgo. *Æneid.* 7.

CHAP. XV.

How to diſpoſe, or prepare the Unravelling.

IF the *Plot* or *Intrigue* muſt be natural, and ſuch as ſprings from the very Subject, as has been already urg'd: Then the *Winding up of the Plot*, by a more ſure Claim, muſt have this Qualification, and be a probable Conſequence of all that went before. As the Readers regard this more than the reſt, ſo ſhould the Poet be ſo much the more exact therein. This is the End of the Poem, and the laſt Impreſſion that is like to be ſtamp'd upon them, and which either leaves them in the Satisfaction they ſought after, or in ſuch a diſſatisfied Temper,

per, as endangers the Reputation of the Author. Let us now ſee the Inſtances *Homer* and *Virgil* have left us of this Practice.

The *Unravelling* of the *Plots* of the *Iliad* is the Ceſſation of the Anger of *Achilles*, who was incenſed at firſt againſt *Agamemnon*, and laſtly againſt *Hector*. There is nothing but what is Natural in the Appeaſing of this Anger. The Abſence of *Achilles* is the Reaſon why the *Greeks* are worſted by the *Trojans*. He abſented himſelf on purpoſe, and 'twas a Pleaſure to him to ſee the Loſs they underwent; that ſo he might be reveng'd on *Agamemnon*, who was the only Perſon, that had affronted him. Among the wounded he believes he ſees one of his Friends. For his better Satisfaction therein, he ſends thither his dear *Patroclus*. But this Favourite of *Achilles* had not the ſame Paſſions with him. He could not but be extremely concern'd at the miſerable Condition his Allies were reduc'd to by the Common Enemy. Theſe unfortunate Princes, who had done *Achilles* no Wrong, importune *Patroclus* to work him into a better Temper; and to perſuade him not to ſuffer they ſhould be ſo unworthily us'd any longer, ſince he could defend them from the Diſgrace. *Patroclus* prevails upon *Achilles* to lend him his Men and Armour, and under this Appearance beats back the Enemy. It is likewiſe Natural that this young Heroe, intoxicated with ſo glorious a Succeſs, ſhould puſh on his Victory farther than *Achilles* had order'd him,

and ſo force *Hector* to fight with and kill him. But ſhall *Achilles* endure, that ſo near and dear a Friend ſhould be butcher'd before his Face, and in his Armour too, without revenging the Deed? That can never be. So then the Death of *Patroclus* is the Cauſe why *Achilles*, who is otherwiſe well enough ſatisfied and revenged upon *Agamemnon*, ſhould be now reconcil'd to him, and accept of his Submiſſion, his Preſents, and the Oath he made that he had never to do with *Briſeis*. This firſt *Intrigue* then is naturally *unravell'd*.

The ſecond could not be brought about by a Reconciliation with *Hector*. It was not in this *Trojan* Prince's Power to reſtore *Patroclus*, as *Agamemnon* had *Briſeis*. Nothing but *Hector*'s Death could be a Satisfaction for that of *Patroclus*. 'Tis by this that *Achilles* begins his Revenge. Beſides, the many Indignities which he offered to the Body of this innocent *Homicide*, and the great Honours he paid to that of his Friend, muſt needs naturally mollifie his Grief, and aſſwage his Paſſion. To conclude, as *Agamemnon* repented, and wholly ſubmitted to what he pleas'd; ſo likewiſe we find King *Priam* proſtrate at his Feet in as miſerable a Condition as a Father could be, that takes on for the Death of his Son. So that there is nothing in the pacified Anger of *Achilles*, and in the Winding up of the Plots of the *Iliad*, but what naturally ariſes from the Subject and the very Action.

We

We ſhall find the ſame in the *Odyſſeis*. *Ulyſſes* by a Tempeſt is caſt upon the Iſland of the *Phæacans*, to whom he diſcovers himſelf, and deſires they would further his Return to his own Country, which was not very far from thence. One cannot ſee any Reaſon why the King of this Iſland ſhould refuſe ſuch a reaſonable Requeſt to a Heroe whom he ſeems to have in great Eſteem. The *Phæacans* had heard him tell the Story of his Adventures: In this fabulous Recital conſiſts all the Advantage they could derive from his Preſence; for the Art of War which they admir'd in him, his Undauntedneſs under Dangers, his indefatigable Patience, and ſuch like Vertues, were ſuch as theſe *Iſlanders* were not uſed to. All their Talent lay in Singing and Dancing, and whatſoever a ſoft and quiet Life eſteem'd Charming. And here we ſee how dextrouſly *Homer* prepares the Incidents he makes uſe of. Theſe People could do no leſs for the Account *Ulyſſes* had given them of his Life, and with which he had ingeniouſly entertain'd them, than conduct him Home by furniſhing him with Shipping which would ſtand them in little or nothing.

When he came Home, his long Abſence, and the Travels which had diſfigur'd him, made him altogether unknown; and the Danger he would have incurr'd, had he diſcover'd himſelf too ſoon, forc'd him to a Diſguiſe, as we hinted before. Laſtly, this Diſguiſe gave him an Opportunity of ſurprizing thoſe young

Gallants, who for ſeveral Years together had been only us'd to ſleep well, and fare daintily.

In the *Latin* Poet, all the hinderance *Æneas* met with was from *Turnus*. The turbulent Spirit of this Rival drew out the *Italians* to fight the *Trojans*, and coſt our Heroe as many Subjects, as there were Soldiers ſlain in both Parties; ſince he was already King of the one, and within a while was to be King of the other. What is to be done then in this Caſe by a Prince ſo valiant as *Æneas*, and ſo affectionate and tender towards his Subjects? * Is it not the moſt natural Thing in the World, that he ſhould declare he was ready to put a ſtop to the Quarrel *Turnus* had cauſed, by fighting ſingly with him? † *Turnus* for his Part ſees the *Latins* vanquiſh'd and dejected; he is ſenſible of the Reproaches they caſt upon him for having expoſed them in his Quarrel, and not daring to anſwer the Demands of *Æneas*. Can he ſhift off the Challenge *Æneas* had ſent him? By this Means the Duel and the *Unravelling* of all the Action happens naturally, and is as it were a neceſſary Conſequence of the Diſpoſition of the Fable.

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* Æquius huic Turno fuerat ſe opponere morti. *Æn.* 11.

† Turnus ut infractos adverſo marte Latinos Defeciſſe videt, ſua nunc promiſſa repoſci, Se ſignari oculis. *Æn.* 12.

Theſe

Theſe are the Examples our Poets have left us of *Ariſtotle*'s Rules. * He teaches us that whatever concludes the Poem, ſhould ſo ariſe from the Conſtitution of the Fable, as if 'twere a Neceſſary, or at leaſt a Probable Conſequence of all that went before.

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* Ταῦτα δὲ δεῖ γίνεσθαι ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς συστάσεως τῶν Μύθων. ὥστε ὅτι τῶν προγεγονημένων συμβαίνειν ἢ ἐξ ἀνάγκης, ἢ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς γίνεσθαι ταῦτα. Poet c. 10.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the ſeveral Sorts of Actions.

THE ſeveral Effects which the *Unravelling* of the Plot produces, and the different States to which it reduces the Perſons, divide the Actions into ſo many Sorts.

The *Unravelling* of the *Intrigue* may be by changing of any one's Fortune from good to bad, as that of *Oedipus*; or from bad to good, as that of *Cinna*. *Oedipus* ſeems to be Innocent; and in the very Moment he thought himſelf Maſter of two Kingdoms, he finds himſelf guilty of Inceſt and Parricide, and becomes miſerable, blind, and an exile. *Cinna*, on the other hand, is condemn'd, and looks for nothing elſe but a cruel Puniſhment; and

contrary to his Expectation he is freed from Death, re-eſtabliſh'd in his Preferments, and made Maſter of *Æmylia*.

Sometimes theſe two contrary Turns of Fortune happen in one and the ſame Action, as in *Heraclius*. *Phocas* is dethron'd, when he thought himſelf ſettled in a ſure Poſt: And *Heraclius* ſteps into the Place of the Tyrant who was gone to viſit the other World.

But let this *Turn* be what it will, double or ſingle, fortunate or unfortunate, 'tis ſtill call'd a *Peripetia*.

Sometimes it happens by the Diſcovery of one or more Perſons, which till then were unknown, as in *Oedipus* and *Heraclius*: Sometimes without any Diſcovery, as in *Cinna*.

But let the *Matter* end which way it will, whether it be a *Peripetia* without a Diſcovery, or a Diſcovery without a *Peripetia*, or both together; this makes a ſort of Action which we call *Implex* or *mix'd*. But if the *Unravelling* be without a Diſcovery, and without a *Peripetia*; if it be a ſimple paſſing from Trouble and Action, to Quiet and Repoſe, then theſe Actions and Fables are call'd *ſingle Ones*.

Sometimes likewiſe by a Sub-diviſion of the Fables wherein is a *Peripetia*, *Ariſtotle* has call'd thoſe *Single*, where the *Peripetia* is *Single*, and only of one Sort, as in *Cinna*: And thoſe *Double*, where the *Peripetia* is double, as in *Heraclius*.

Ac-

According to this laſt Diviſion, the Fable of the *Odyſſeis* is double, becauſe the *Unravelling* of the *Intrigue* makes *Ulyſſes* and his Party paſs from a miſerable to an honourable State; and caſts his Rivals from their Merriments to a ſhameful Death. * This Action then is likewiſe *Implex*. 'Tis not only unravell'd by this double *Peripetia*, but likewiſe by the *Diſcovery of* Ulyſſes.

There is neither a *Diſcovery* nor a *Peripetia* in the *Iliad*. Two Generals of the ſame Party fall out, and then agree, after they had both ſuffered conſiderable Loſſes: *Achilles* loſes his Friend *Patroclus*, and *Agamemnon* his Glory and Authority: He is vanquiſhed by the *Trojans*, and forc'd to ſubmit to his Inferiour *Achilles*, to acknowledge his Fault, and to give him Satisfaction. In the ſecond Part, two Enemies fight, and he who was the weakeſt, and knew himſelf ſo, is at laſt vanquiſh'd and kill'd. This Action then is wholly Single.

There is no more *Complexedneſs* in the *Plots* of the *Æneid*, than in thoſe of the *Iliad*. *Dido*, who came to ſo miſerable a Death, was not more fortunate before that Cataſtrophe. Her Love for *Æneas* fills her at firſt with Trouble and Diſquiet. Her Marriage increaſes both, and adds thereto the diſmal Fear,

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* Ἡ μὲν οὖν Ἰλιὰς Ἁπλῆ καὶ παθητικὴ, ἡ δὲ Ὀδύσσεια Πεπλεγμένη. Ariſt. Poet. c. 24.

where-

whereby ſhe foreſaw her Loſs, and all the Horrors of her Death. * If ſhe had any good Fortune when ſhe reveng'd her firſt Husband, puniſh'd the Treachery of her Brother, and was eſtabliſh'd ſo glorioufly, all this happen'd before the *Trojans* arriv'd at *Carthage*: And by Conſequence having nothing to do with the Action, could not make a *Peripetia*. Nothing paſs'd between *Æneas* and *Turnus*, that is more complex'd, than that which happen'd in the Quarrel between *Achilles* and *Hector*. So that the Action of the *Æneid* is altogether *Simple*, without a *Peripetia* or a *Diſcovery*.

Not that the *Æneid* is abſolutely without a *Peripetia*; there are ſome in the leſſer *Epiſodes*. In the fighting with Whirl-bats, *Entellus* is knock'd down at the Feet of his Antagoniſt; ev'ry one looked upon him as vanquiſh'd, and *Dares* began to Triumph. But when Rage had reſtor'd this old Combatant the Force which Age had robb'd him of, on a ſudden he leaps up, and *Dares* found himſelf ſo over-match'd, and ſo confounded, that he could not make the leaſt Reſiſtance. But the Quality of theſe *Epiſodes* make nothing againſt the *Entire Action*. The Fable, proper-

* Urbem præclaram ſtatui, mea mœnia vidi. Ulta virum pœnas inimico à fratre recepi. Fœlix, heu nimium fœlix ſi littora tantum Nunquam Dardaniæ tetigiſſent noſtra carinæ! *Æn.* 4.

ly ſpeaking, is only *Complex* when the *Peripetia* or *Diſcovery* happens in the main *Unravelling*, which is the End of the Action.

I ſhall not ſtay here to enumerate all the Sorts of *Diſcoveries Ariſtotle* has mention'd. There is none in the *Æneid*, for the ſake of which I chiefly write: And elſewhere this Subject is commonly handled in the Rules Men lay down for the *Dramatick* Poem, where is the moſt Occaſion for them.

But I cannot omit the *Concluſion* of the Action; 'Tis a Conſequence of the *Unravelling*, and a part or a neceſſary Qualification of the *Integrity* of the Poem.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Concluſion *of the* Action.

THAT which we call here the *Concluſion of the Epick Action* is the very laſt Paſſage from Agitation and Trouble, to Quiet and Repoſe: So that there is a great deal of Difference between the *Unravelling* and the *Concluſion* of an Action. This laſt is nothing elſe but a kind of Moment without Extent and Duration: But the firſt is of ſome length, ſince it comprehends all that happens after the *Plot*. Beſides, there are a great many *Unravellings*

ravellings in a Poem, becauſe there are a great many *Intrigues*: All that are before the laſt make no kind of Ceſſation, but ſtart up new Difficulties, which is quite contrary to the *Concluſion*. The *Concluſion* then is the End of the laſt *Unravelling*, ſo that there can be no more than *One*.

This Doctrine is a Conſequence of that which we laid down concerning *Epiſodes*. None of them, as we urg'd, ſhould be *Entire*; and only the laſt can be regularly finiſh'd. A great many *Concluſions* then is no where to be found but in *Epiſodical* Poems, as in the *Thebaid* of *Statius*, where he has finiſh'd the Story of *Hypſipyle*.

But now for ſome better Inſtances in the Practice of our two Poets.

The firſt Part of *Virgil*'s Poem is the Voyage of *Æneas* from *Troy* to *Italy*. The *Plot* is the Difficulty of getting thither, and the Oppoſition of *Juno* who raiſes Storms, and other Obſtacles againſt him. The *Unravelling* begins at the laſt Voyage of the Heroe from *Sicily* (which he leaves in the fifth Book) to *Italy* and the Mouth of *Tyber*, where he arrives in the ſixth and ſeventh Book. This *Unravelling* * puts an End to the Labours and Hazards of the Voyage. But does it put an End to all the Troubles and Dangers of

* Ea vox audita laborum Prima tulit finem. *Æn.* 7.

Æneas ſ

Æneas? No: * On the contrary it casts him upon greater. It leaves him not in Repose, but puts him upon more Action and more Business than ever he had before. And therefore 'tis not the *Conclusion*.

The *Conclusion* is not always joyn'd to the *Solution* of that *Intrigue* which seems to be most general, as was the Design of *Juno* in the *Æneid*. This Goddess gives over acting, but *Æneas* does not. He has still *Turnus* to deal withal. In a Word, since the Poet does not sing the Action of *Juno*, but of *Æneas*, the Poem and the Action remain still unfinish'd, even when this Divine Enemy has given over. All the *Conclusion* then is included in the Death of *Turnus*, because that puts an End to the Action of *Æneas*.

Tis true, that even then *Æneas* had not quite executed his Designs, he had not built his City, nor established his Religion, nor married *Lavinia*. But it must be observ'd that these Things are not Necessary. 'Tis enough that all Obstacles were remov'd, and that the Reader be no longer in doubt of what follows. And this is the Case of the *Æneid*. In this Particular it is very Compleat, and needs no Supplement. If one Instance is not enough to justifie this Doctrine, we can have recourse to the *Theatre*. Marriage is very

* O tandem magnis pelagi defuncte periclis, Sed terra graviora manent. *Æn.* 6.

com-

commonly the very End of *Dramatick* Poems: And yet that is not always perform'd before the Spectators. The Actors ſtep in to perform this Ceremony within Doors: No Body expects they ſhould come out again upon the Stage; or that they ſhould tell the Audience of it, as * *Plautus* has done in one of his Plays, more to make People laugh, than becauſe he was forc'd to it.

Homer has concluded his *Odyſſeis* by the League which *Pallas* makes between *Ulyſſes* and his Neighbours. And yet he does not make it appear by the Continuation of the Poem, whether the Articles were faithfully kept or no.

He has not us'd the ſame Method in the *Iliad*. The Obſervation of the Truce depended upon *Achilles*. The Poet had good Reaſon to preſume that all his Readers were not perſuaded of the Moderation of ſo Paſſionate a Man. It was a Buſineſs of the higheſt Importance for the *Concluſion* of this Action to convince them that his Anger was appeas'd. This Heroe in the whole Series of the Poem had appeared ſo teſty, unreaſonable, and unjuſt, that tho' the Poet's Precaution was very great and

* Ne expectetis, ſpectatores, dum illi huc ad vos exeunt. Nemo exibit, omnes intus conficiunt Negotium. Ubi id erit factum, ornamenta ponent. Poſtidea loci, Qui deliquit vapulabit, Qui non deliquit bibet. *Plaut. Ciſtell.*

exact

exact, yet one might distrust this extravagant Humour, as long as the Body of his Enemy was in a Condition of being insulted over. They were then ready to bestow such Honours upon this Corps, as one might fear would put our Heroe into a Passion. So that the Poet thought himself oblig'd to carry on the Funeral and the Observation of the Truce to the very End of his Poem: That so he might absolutely convince us of his Tranquillity and Repose, whose Action and Anger he had undertook to Sing.

After having observed what the *Conclusion* of the Action is, and when it ought to be made, there remains still a third Question behind: And that is to know whether the *Conclusion* ought to leave the Heroe in a happy State, or whether 'tis allowable to leave him in a miserable Condition.

Our Poets have not given us any Examples of a Heroe, that is left in a miserable and forlorn Condition. Sad *Conclusions* are proper for *Tragedy*: But in that they were more in Vogue formerly, than they are now-a-days: Because in the Popular States of *Greece*, where Monarchy was Odious, nothing was heard with greater Pleasure and Ardency than the Misfortunes of Kings. *Aristotle* has still another Reason for preferring this kind of Catastrophe to a more happy one. The *Tragical Scene* is the Throne of the Passions, where Terror and Compassion ought to rule over all the rest. Now these two Passions arise natural-

ly from ſad Events: And the Spectators going from the Theatre with their Minds full of the Misfortunes they were Eye-witneſſes of, do doubtleſſy preſerve their Tenderneſs a great deal longer, and reſent more ſuch forcible Effects, than if their Tears were dried up, and their Sighs abated by the Satisfaction of a more proſperous Cataſtrophe.

But theſe Reaſons will not ſerve for the *Epopéa*, ſince 'tis not ſo much for refining the Paſſions, as for making Men put off ill Habits, and put on good ones. 'Tis likewiſe as true, that this does not exclude ſad Events. Beſides the Nature of the Fable is as capable of good as bad Perſons for its chief Actors. The ſad Adventure of the *Lamb* unjuſtly butcher'd by the *Wolf* is as juſt, as inſtructive, and as regular a Subject, as the Generoſity of the *Elephant*, who quitted his Anger upon the Innocence of the ſame *Lamb*.

Tis true, if the Poets in the Perſon of their Heroe propoſed an Example of Perfection for Imitation, the Misfortunes into which this Heroe falls, and his unſucceſsful Enterprizes, would ſuit very ill with the Deſigns of theſe Authors. But the Practice of *Homer* in his *Iliad*, and the Approbation given him by *Ariſtotle* and *Horace* for the ſame, will not permit us to think that the Deſign of the *Epopéa* ſhould be to give us theſe fine Ideas of a perfect Heroe. Theſe three great Men did certainly never pretend that *Achilles*, the Heroe of the Fable, was a Model of Vertue.

We

We cannot then from any of theſe Principles determine any thing concerning the fortunate or unfortunate End of an *Epick Action*.

But if any heed be to be given to Authority, I do not know any one Inſtance of a Poet, who finiſhes his Piece with the Misfortune of his Heroe. Our three Poems afford us quite contrary Inſtances; and *Statius* himſelf has quite ſpoil'd the *Unity of his Action*, becauſe he would not leave upon the Minds of his Readers that miſerable Fratricide, which was the true *Concluſion* of it. So that all the Poets ſeem to conſpire for a happy Cataſtrophe.

In a Word, ſince the *Epick Poem*'s Action is of a larger Extent than that of the Theatre; it would perhaps be leſs Satisfactory to the Readers, if, after ſo much Pains and ſo long Troubles with which this kind of Poem is always fill'd, it ſhould at laſt bring them to a doleful and unhappy End. *Achilles* as unjuſt and violent as he was, yet in his Valour ſhew'd ſuch an Air of Greatneſs, which dazles our Sight, and will not let us ſee his Faults ſo, as to wiſh him any greater Puniſhment than what he ſuffer'd by the Death of his Friend. In ſpeaking of the Fable, I hinted upon what Account the *Iliad* ſhould end thus, becauſe it redounded more to the Happineſs and the Glory of the *Grecians*.

Virgil had the ſame Reaſon to pleaſe his Audience. The *Romans* would have been diſguſted and offended, if he had ill uſed their

Foun-

Founder and Ancestors: And besides in the *Odysseis* and the *Æneid* the Poets would have been unjust, and the Readers dissatisfied, if such brave Princes and such noble Souls as *Ulysses* and *Æneas* had been suffer'd to sink under any Misfortune. *Achilles*, who fell far short of their Vertue, was likewise but little less Fortunate.

Let the Case be how it will, yet I fancy there needs a great deal of Skill to give the Heroe of the *Epopéa* a sad and mournful End, which might be received with a general Applause.

This is what we had to say concerning the *Integrity* of the Epick Action. There remain still two of its Qualifications behind, its *Duration*, and its *Importance*: Of each of which briefly.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the Duration *of the* Action.

THE Time of the *Epick Action* is not ſo limited as that of the Theatre. * *This laſt* (ſays *Ariſtotle*) *ſhould take up as much Time, as the Sun does in going about the Earth, or thereabouts. But the Epopéa has no fixed Time, and in that it differs from the Dramatick Poem.* Theſe are all the Rules he has left us upon this Head. They conſiſt in two Things: The Firſt, That the *Epick Action* is longer than the *Dramatick*; and, Secondly, That the *Epick Actions* may be, ſome longer than others.

The Firſt is a Compariſon between the *Epopéa* and the *Drama:* Concerning which we ſay that an uninterrupted *Duration* is a great deal more neceſſary in an Action, which one ſees and are preſent at; than in one which we read, or only hear repeated. It is not natural to imagine one can ſpend Days and Nights without Sleeping, Eating and Drinking, pure-

* Ἡ μὲν οὖν ὅτι μάλιστα περιέχεται ὑπὸ μίαν περίοδον ἡλίου εἶναι, ἢ μικρὸν ἐξαλλάττειν· ἡ δὲ ἐπικὴ ἀόριστος τῷ χρόνῳ καὶ τούτῳ διαφέρει. Poet. c. 5.

ly

ly to mind the Event of Things; and that, without moving out of the Place, one can be conveyed to ſeveral Places: And hence ariſes the *Unity* of *Time* and *Place* ſo neceſſary to the *Drama*. But neither of theſe two *Unities* is neceſſary to the *Epick Poem*, becauſe we read it as an Hiſtory which we may leave off when we pleaſe.

Beſides, *Tragedy* being full of Paſſions, and conſequently full of ſuch a Violence as cannot laſt long, requires a ſhorter Time; and the *Epick Poem* requires a longer Time for to give Leiſure to the Habits, if good, to ſink deep into the Minds and Souls of the Readers; or to be rooted thence, if bad. Theſe two Reaſons conſtitute the Difference between the *Epick* and the *Dramatick* Action, as to their *Duration*.

But the Difficulty is to know how long theſe Actions of the *Epopéa* ſhould laſt; and, whether, ſince as *Ariſtotle* ſays they are unlimited, this does not cauſe ſome Difference between the Actions of the ſame kind. All we can do in the Caſe, is to lay down the Practice of our Poets, and to make ſuch Reflexions therein, as *Ariſtotle* has given us Liberty to make.

This Philoſopher ſays, *Whatſoever is violent cannot laſt long*; and, in his Poeſie he tells us, *That the Manners of the Perſonages are either* * *violent and ſtrong, or calm, ſe-*

* Καὶ ὀργίλους καὶ ῥαθύμους. C. 15.

date

date and ſoft. The firſt cannot laſt ſo long as the other. A Man can be good humour'd, peaceable, and prudent all his Life-long, and no Body will find Fault with it: But one would wonder to ſee him keep up his Anger, and be in a violent Agitation of Body and Mind all that Time.

And though this long Train of Paſſions were probable; yet it would not be neceſſary in a Poem that is deſigned to root out, or plant in Habits: Since the Habits are ſooner received and impreſſed by violent Actions, than by ſuch as are gentle and moderate. We ought to conclude then, that the more Violence any Action has, the leſs Time it ought to laſt.

This is what we ſee in the Practice of our Poets.

The * *Iliad* contains not only the Anger and Paſſion of *Achilles*, but likewiſe of the Kings and People that are the Perſonages of it. The Poet allows this Action ſeven and forty Days only. Nor is this little Time deſigned all for the Anger of *Achilles*, though the moſt principal and the moſt violent. We muſt ſubſtract at one End the nine Days of the Plague, which were before his Quarrel with *Agamemnon*: And at the other, the eleven Days of the Truce which he granted to King *Priam*.

* Scultorum regum & populorum continet æſtus. *Hor. Ep. ad Lollium.*

Be-

Beſides, theſe ſeven and twenty Days of Anger are not all ſpent in the Action. The eleven firſt are allowed for the Curing and Recovery of the *Grecians*; and the eleven laſt for the Funeral-Pomp which *Achilles* beſtowed on the Body of *Patroclus*. So that the Fight begins and ends in five Days time. Nor does the Fight laſt all the Time; but on the ſecond Day there was a Ceſſation of Arms for burning the Dead on both Sides.

To conclude, *Achilles*, the chief Heroe of the Poem, and the very Life of all the Violence that reigns there; he, I ſay, who being tranſported with it more than the reſt, ought likewiſe to continue in this Exceſs leſs Time, fought only one Day. By this means all the Poem founded upon Violence laſts but a little while: And the *Duration* of that which was moſt violent is judiciouſly retrenched by the Poet.

The Deſign of the *Odyſſeis* is quite different from that of the *Iliad*; ſo likewiſe is the Management of it, as to its *Duration*. The Character of the Heroe is Prudence and Wiſdom. And this Moderation gives the Poet liberty to extend his Action to as long a Time as he pleaſes, and his political Inſtructions required. Therefore he did not allow this Action ſome Weeks as he had that of the *Iliad*; but he takes up eight Years and a half, from the taking of *Troy*, at which it begins, to the Peace of *Ithaca*, where it ends.

The

The *Æneid* is like the *Odyſſeis*. The * Character of the Heroe is Piety and Meekneſs: And Politicks are likewiſe eſſential thereto. Therefore the *Duration* of the Action is continued after the ſame manner. The Poet makes the Recital thereof begin at the building of the Wooden Horſe, juſt before the taking of *Troy*. This City was taken a great while before the beginning of Summer, ſo that *Æneas* had Time enough to fit out a Fleet. † He quits *Troy* at the Beginning of the firſt Summer: ‡ Arrives at *Sicily* by the End of the ſeventh, and immediately after comes to *Italy*, where his Action continues one or two Months longer to the Death of *Turnus*. All this makes up a little more than ſix Years and a half, and not quite ſeven. This is the *Duration* of the Action of the *Æneid*.

There is ſtill another way of reckoning the *Time* of the *Epick Poem*. 'Tis to compute only what the Poet himſelf relates. By this means the *Odyſſeis* begins at the firſt meeting of the Gods; and the *Æneid*, at that Time when the Storm caſt the *Trojans* upon *Carthage*. As for all that went before, we only reckon ſo much Time as was requiſite for

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* Sum pius Æneas, *Æn.* 1.

† Jam prima incœperat æſtas, Et pater Anchiſes dare fatis vela jubebat. *Æn.* 3.

‡ Septima poſt Trojæ excidium jam vertitur æſtas. *Æn.* 5.

Ulysses and *Æneas* to make the Narration of their Adventures in, *viz.* a Night. This way of computing the Time, reduces the Action of several Years into the space of a few Months, and this Computation is no less necessary than the other. But because this belongs rather to the *Narration* than the *Action*, we reserve it for the ensuing Book.

Here we only regard the *Duration* of the *Action*, as being the *Matter* of the Poem. For this Reason we reckon not the Incidents which are added thereto: Such as the Wound of *Ulysses* upon *Parnassus*, and the Sequel of the *Italian* History from *Æneas* down to *Augustus Cæsar*'s Reign.

Tis enough that we have shown the *Duration* of the Actions of the *Iliad*, the *Odysseis*, and the *Æneid*, and the Difference between them; which is so great even in *Homer*, that one of his Actions contains less than two Months, and the other more than eight Years.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the Importance of the Action.

THE *Epick* Poet cannot insinuate himself into the Mind of his Hearers by the Diversions of *Comedy*; nor by the force and vivacity of *Tragedy*. Let him use never so much Artifice to seize upon a Passion, yet if one compares his Recitals with the Action of the Theatre, one may apply thereto what *Horace* says: * *That the Soul is less affected with what it hears, than with what it sees.* So that besides the Reasons drawn from the Nature of these Poems, we may likewise from hence conclude, that the *Epick Poet* lies under a greater Obligation than the *Dramatick*, of surprizing the Minds of his Readers by Admiration, and by the *Importance* of the Things he treats of; and of taking for his Subject a Great, Noble, and Important Action. *Aristotle* requires this Grandour, and this Lustre in the *Epick Action*, † and says *That the Epopéa and Tragedy do*

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* Segnius irritant animos dimissa per aurem, Quàm quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, & quæ Ipse sibi tradit Spectator. *Hor. Poet.*

† Ἡ μὲν οὖν Ἐποποιΐα τῇ Τραγῳδίᾳ μέχρι μόνου μέτρου μετὰ λόγου μίμησις εἶναι σπουδαίων ἠκολούθησεν. Poet. c. 5.

both imitate whatever is moſt noble and important.

But the Action may be *important* two ways: Either of its ſelf independently from him that executes it; or by the Quality of the Perſons the Poet is pleaſed to make uſe of.

Horace excludes mean Perſonages, and would have them be Crowned Heads: But neither he nor *Ariſtotle* ſays any thing to ſhew that the Action in its own Nature ought to be great and *important*. And in Truth they could not require this Qualification without condemning the Poet, that in their Opinion is the leaſt to blame of any in the World, and without rejecting the Model they propoſed. If one conſiders the two Actions of *Homer* without the Names and their *Epiſodes*, as *Ariſtotle* would have them be prepared at firſt, one ſhall find nothing in them but what is common, and which requires no higher Qualities, than thoſe a Merchant, a Burgomaſter, or at moſt a plain Country-Squire is capable of. You need only reflect upon the two Models we have given of them, one of which *Ariſtotle* himſelf drew. One ſhall find nothing there but what might have happened to ordinary Perſons. 'Tis this, "A Man returns to his own Country, and "finds a great many Diſorders in his Family. "Two others fall out about a Captive Wench, "and break the Neck of their Affairs." This teaches us that to make Action *important*, 'tis enough that it be the Action of noble and important Perſons.

'Tis

'Tis true, *Horace* makes mention of Wars: But there is no need for them, 'tis only by accident that they are in the Poem. I might urge, that this is only upon the Account of the *Heroe* who ought to be a Warrior, ſuch as *Achilles*, *Ulyſſes*, and *Æneas*. *Homer*, who is cited by *Horace* in this Point, ſhall teſtifie it: There is ſo little War in the *Odyſſeis*, that there is not the leaſt Colour to think *Horace* meant to affirm that Wars were the *ſubject Matter*, or a conſiderable Part thereof. The Poet mentions but three Rencounters, that of the *Ciconians*, that of the *Leſtrygons*, and that of ſome *Ithacans*, who were for revenging of their Maſters, whom *Ulyſſes* had murdered at his Houſe. The Recitals of theſe three Battles, if a Man may call theſe Adventures ſo, are made in leſs than forty Verſes in all.

But however 'tis, yet the Return of a Man to his own Home, and the Quarrel of two others, that have nothing that is great in themſelves, become noble and *important* Actions; when, in the Choice of the Names, the Poet tells us that 'tis *Ulyſſes*, who returns back into *Ithaca*; and that 'tis *Achilles* and *Agamemnon*, who fall out with one another at the famous Siege of *Troy*. 'Tis then theſe Affairs become Matters of State.

But there are Actions that of themſelves are very *important*, ſuch as the Eſtabliſhing, or the Downfal, of a State or a Religion. Such then is the Action of the *Æneid*. There can

nothing be imagined more great, noble, and auguſt, ſince it comprehends both the Civil State and Religion.

There is yet another Way of making an Action great, by the Grandour of the Perſonages under whoſe Names we repreſent it.

This way is to give a higher *Idea* of theſe Perſonages than that which the Readers conceive of all they know to be great. This is performed by comparing the Men of the Poem, with the Men of the preſent Time in which the Poet writes.

Homer ſays that two Men of his Time could not carry the Stone, which *Diomedes* with eaſe threw at *Æneas*; and *Virgil* ſays that the Stone *Turnus* flung at the ſame *Æneas*, would have been too heavy a Burden for twelve Men in the Time of *Auguſtus*. In ſhort, according to *Homer*'s Account, who lived one or two Ages after *Æneas*, and who pretends that Men's Strength was abated to a Moiety of what it was before, this ſame Strength may well be reduced to the pitch *Virgil* would have it ten Ages after. 'Tis by this means theſe two Poets were willing to render the Subjects of their Poems more great and auguſt by the Strength and Grandour of their Perſonages, and by theſe great *Ideas* which they ſuper-added to thoſe which the Men of their Times conceived.

This very Reaſon obliged them not to repreſent their Heroes ſuperior to thoſe of former Ages: But the probable Diminution from

Age

Age to Age, as they ſuppoſed, ought on the contrary to give the Fathers the Preference over their Children. *Homer* makes no Difficulty of it; and * *Neſtor* who had lived two Ages already, ſays, without any Complement to the Princes of the *Iliad*, that they fell ſhort of their Fore-fathers. † *Virgil* alſo ſays, that the Times of *Ilus* and *Aſſaracus* were better than thoſe in which his Heroe lived.

It ſeems *Statius* had the ſame Mind to repreſent the Strength of his Heroes, as far ſurpaſſing that of *Homer*'s and *Virgil*'s Heroes, though in Truth the Heroes of the one were only the Children of the Heroes of the other two; ſo prodigious are the Actions he would attribute to ſome. But 'tis more likely, that herein his whole Aim was to amplifie to a Prodigy whatſoever he handled. For if by this extraordinary Strength he had a Mind to heighten the Grandour and Importance of his Action, he forgot himſelf in ſeveral Places, and has done ſomething worſe than Sleep, when he debaſed it ſo much in his firſt Book. 'Tis there, where to ſhew the Baſeneſs and Poverty of the Kingdom of *Thebes*, he compares it to the Power and Riches of the greateſt Em-

* Ἦδη γὰρ ποτ' ἐγὼ μετὰ ἀρείοσι, καὶ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν Ἀνδράσιν ὡμάλησα. Iliad. 1.

† Hic genus antiquum, Teucri pulcherrima proles, Magnanimi Heroes nati melioribus annis Iluſque Aſſaracuſque, &c. *Æn.* 6.

pires

pires that have flouriſh'd ſince. Is it not pleaſant in him to declaim himſelf againſt the Deſign he beſtows upon his *Heroes*, and to ridicule the great Labour he puts them upon for a wretched and pitiful Kingdom?

* *'Tis for a ſordid Kingdom that they ſtrive.*

How ill an Imitation is this of *Virgil*'s *Epiphonema*, which gives us ſo lofty and ſo juſt an Idea of the Importance of his Subject:

† *So vaſt a Thing it was to found the* Roman *State!*

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* Bellum eſt de paupere Regno. *Thebaid. l. 1.*

† Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem. *Æn. 1.*

FINIS.

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